
Imprimatur Liber cui Titulus,
A Preservative against Popery, &c.

Febr. 2. 1687.

*Guil. Needham, R. R.
in Christo Prac D.D.
Wilhelmo Archiepisc.
Cant. à Sacr. Domest.*



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A

Preservative AGAINST POPE RY:

Being some Plain
DIRECTIONS
TO
Unlearned PROTESTANTS,
How to Dispute with
Romish Priests.

The First P A R T.

By **WILLIAM SHERLOCK, D. D.**
Master of the Temple.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *William Rogers*, at the *Sun* over against
St. Dunstan's Church in *Fleet-street*.

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THE POETRY

DIAGOLOCIES

BY MARY HARRIS



BY MARY HARRIS

THE POETRY PARADE

BY MARY HARRIS

Wife of the Lamb

THE POETIC GARDEN

London

THIS IS FOR MARY ROSE OF THE ROSE

22. DAWES' CHURCH IN NEW YORK

WEDDING

A

PRESERVATIVE
AGAINST
POPERY.

The Introduction.

While so many Learned Pens are employed to such excellent purpose, in answering the Writings, and confuting the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome, I cannot but think it a very useful Work to give some plain Directions to those, who are Unlearned, who have neither Time to Read, nor Money to Buy, nor Abilities to Understand more Learned Controversies. Our Divines indeed have taken great care to write short Tracts, with great Plainness and Perspicuity, and with as little unnecessary shew of Learning as may be, to fit them the better for Unlearned Readers; and they have had, by the blessing of God, wonderful Success; Popery was never so generally understood, as it is at this day; the meanest Tradesmen can now dispute against Popery with sufficient Skill and Judgment, and need not be beholding to the prejudices of Education to secure them: and therefore my business shall not be at present down right to State any one Controversie be-

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tween us, and the Church of Rome, but to direct our People how to secure themselves against the Attaques of our Roman Adversaries, to check their conferring and disputing Humour, or to baffle them. I shall reduce all into as plain a Method and as short a Compass as I can, and shew,

First, How to stop them at the beginning of their Dispute.

Secondly, Give some Rules about the Topicks, from which they Dispute, such as Reason, Scripture, and the Authority of the Ancient Fathers and Writers of the Church.

Thirdly, How to Answer some of their most popular Pre-
ferences, such as the Uncertainty of the Protestant Religion,
the Mis-representations of Popery, &c.

Fourthly, To give some short Directions as to particular Controversies.

C H A P. I.

W

How Protestants may prevent Disputing with Papists.

Now I do not by this mean, that they should always avoid their Company, and run away from them where-ever they meet them, which is very ill Manners; though it is not adviseable neither to court such Attaquists, or to make them our Intimates, when neither the Obligations of Nature, nor other Civil or Political Reasons make it necessary; for Conversation many times prevails more than Arguments can do, and will as soon corrupt Mens Faith, as Manners.

Nor do I mean, that Protestants should obstinately refuse to Discourse with Papists when they meet them; to hear

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hear what they have to say for themselves, and to give a Reason for their own Faith; this is not agreeable to Protestant Principles, to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good; and yet this ought to be done with great prudence and caution too: for there are a sort of perverse Disputers, who are to be avoided according to the Apostolick Precept. *If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereby cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; supposing, that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thy self.* 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5.

Men of weak Judgments, and who are not skilled in the Laws of Disputation, may easily be imposed on by cunning Sopliusters, and such as lie in wait to deceive: The Church of *Roma* is very sensible of this, and therefore will not suffer her People to dispute their Religion, or to read Heretical Books, nay not so much as to look into the Bible it self; but though we allow all this to our People, as that which God not only allows, but requires, and which all considering men will allow themselves, whoever forbids it; yet we do not allow them to be perpetual Seekers, to be always doubtful of their Religion, to be like *children tossed too and fro with every wind of Doctrine*. And therefore the liberty of Judging and Inquiring, which we allow, is only that they may understand the true Reasons of their Faith, and be well grounded in it, which men may be, who are not able to answer every cavilling Objection; but it is an abuse of this liberty, when men have itching Ears, and hearken after all Novelties of Opinions, and grow wanton and sceptical Disputers, and therfore it is very consistent with that liber-

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ty, which Protestants allow, to advise Christians to be very careful how they hearken to such as Preach any new Doctrine, which they have not been taught ; that the weak in Faith and Knowledge should not venture upon doubtful Disputations ; that they should not be hasty to question what they have believed, nor to give heed to new Doctrines ; that they should not rely on their own understanding in these matters, but when they meet with any difficulties, should consult their Spiritual Guides, not to be finally determined by their Authority, as the Church of *Rome* requires, but to hear their Reasons, and what Answers they can give to such difficulties, as they themselves cannot answer. With such Cautions as these, we dare venture our People to hear, and read, and enquire, as much as they please, and have not found yet, that our *Roman* Adversaries have been able to make any great impression upon such honest and prudent Inquirers. But that which I intend at present, is of another nature, to teach our People a Way to make these men sick of Disputing themselves, to make them leave off those Imper-
tinent and Noisie Squabbles, with which they disturb all Company they come into : and this is no such mighty Secret neither, as may be expected, but is very plain and obvious at the first proposal.

For when you are assaulted by such troublesome Disputers, only ask them, Whether they will allow you to judge for your selves in matters of Religion ; if they will not, why do they trouble you with Disputing ? for the end of Disputing, is to convince ; and you cannot be convinced, unless you may judge to. Would they Dispute with a Stone, that can neither hear, nor understand ? or would they make a Speech to convince a Horse, that he is out of his way, and must take another Road, if he would return home ? And do they not talk to as little purpose, and

and spend their breath as vain upon a man, who can hear indeed, and understand somewhat, but must not follow his own understanding? If they say, that you must judge for your selves, ask them, Whether this be the Doctrine of their Church, that private men may judge for themselves? Whether this do not resolve our Faith into a private Spirit, which they say, is the Protestant Heresie, and the foundation of Protestant Uncertainty? If they once open this Gap to Hereticks into the Church, there is great danger that more will run out at it, than will come in; and it is well if the Church it self stays behind: for what becomes of the Church of *Rome*, if all their glorious Cant of the Infallibility of Church, and Popes, and General Councils, be at last resolved into a private Spirit! While these men go about to Dispute Hereticks into their Church, they unavoidably give up the Cause of the Church, and of Infallibility; which is the way to Dispute a great many good Catholicks out of it, who are kept there only by the power of a blind and implicate Faith. Here then let our Protestant fix his foot, and not stir an inch, till they disown Infallibility, and confess, that every man can and must judge for himself in matters of Religion, according to the Proofs that are offered to him. For will a wise man dispute with one, who he knows banterers him all the while? who appeals to his private Judgment (as all men do, who dispute with one another) and at the same time cries down this private Spirit as the cause of Schisms, and Heresies, and Blasphemies, and every think that is evil: no man of any spirit, but will scorn to dispute with one who intends only to put a trick on him, and to out-wit him if he can; and in truth it is no more to endeavour to dispute a man into Popery, when the Fundamental Principle of Popery is, 'That we must not Reason and Dispute, but Believe; that we must take

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our Faith upon the Authority of the Church, without asking any questions about it. There are two or three things, which may be answered to this.

1. That though Disputing be not a proper way for Papists to take, yet it is the only way, that can be taken with Protestants, who are all for Disputing, and will believe nothing without a Reason, and therefore Protestants ought not to blame Papists for Disputing, unless they would be good Catholicks without it. Now in answer to this, I have something to say to Papists, and something to Protestants.

As for the Papists, what necessity soever they be in of Disputing, I desire to know, with what face they can reprobate Protestants with adhering to their own private Judgements, when they themselves are such zealous Disputants, which is an Appeal to every private mans Judgement. If ever they make any Converts, they must be beholden to mens private Judgements for it, for I think men cannot change their Opinions, without exercising a private Judgment about it, and I suppose when they dispute with men, to make them Papists, they intend to convert them by their own private Judgements. Now what difference is there between men using their private Judgements to turn Papists, or to turn Protestants? one indeed may be false, and the other true; but private Judgment is private Judgment still. And if it be greater a fault for men to use their own private Judgements, it is as great a fault in a Papist as it is in a Protestant. So that at least as to Converts, the Church of Rome has no advantage in this particular over Protestant Churches, same by the exercise of their own Reason and Judgment, go over to the Church of Rome, and some to the Church of England; some are disputed into Papery, and some into Protestantism; and therefore for the sake of their beloved

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Converts, and their beloved Disputations, they ought to be more favourable to a private Spirit: The truth is, by Disputing with Hereticks, they give up their Causle, and confess, that in all Disputes of Religion, their lies an Appeal to every man's private Judgment and Conscience; and should they lose this Point by their Disputing, all the Converts they make, cannot recompence such a loss.

Secondly; As for Protestants, though they have no other way to satisfie themselves, or to convince others, but by Reason and Discourse; yet this is no reason why they should Dispute with those men who disown the judgment of Reason, as a private Spirit. For why should I Dispute with any man who uses such Arguments to convince me, as he himself does not think a sufficient Reason of Faith? Ask then one of these Disputers, who alledges Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity, to prove any Doctrines of the *Romish* Faith. Do you, Sir, believe Transubstantiation, the Worship of Images, the Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Mass for the Dead, upon the bare Authority of these Scriptures and Fathers, you have produced for them? If these Doctrines were not Defined by the Church, should you think these Arguments sufficient to provethem? or would you suppose, the Church had Defined the contrary, should you think the Arguments good still? In short, can any Reason, any Authority of Scripture, or Fathers, be any Foundation for a Divine Faith, but only the Authority of the Church? He that says, they can, is no Papist; and he that says, they cannot, confesses, that he uses such Arguments, as he himself does not build his Faith upon: If you will believe them you may; but though you do, you are no sound Believer, without resoving your Faith solely into the Authority of the Church. And, I think, he must love Dispu-

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Disputing well, who will Dispute with such men as these ; and those must have a good degree of assurance, who will be troublesome with their Disputes, after such a discovery. The end of Disputing, I suppose, is either to convince, or to be convinced : but should you Answer and baffle all such a man's Arguments, if he be modest, it may be he may blush a little, but is not to be moved ; for his Faith, after all, is not built upon these Arguments, but upon Church-Authority : and it is to no purpose for you to suffer your self to be convinced by these Arguments, for it will not make you a good Catholick, without resolving your Faith wholly into the Authority of the Church. It is certainly a very surprizing thing for a Protestant to be disputed into Popery ; for as soon as he is converted, he must renounce the very means of his Conversion : He must use his own Judgment to turn Papist, and as soon as he is turned, he must renounce his own Judgment, and confess it to be of no Authority : Now though it may be such a private Judgment as leads a man to Popery, way as well deserve to be renounced, as any ; yet it is an odd kind of contradiction, to renounce our own private Reason and Judgment, and yet to own our Conversion ; methinks such men should renounce their Conversion too at the same time they renounce their Reason : for if their Conversion be good, it is a sign their Judgment was so ; but if their Judgment be not fit to be trusted, methinks this should make them question their Conversion : And therefore they should either maintain the Reputation of their Judgment and Conversion together, and then they cannot be good Catholicks, while they adhere to their own Judgment, or they should renounce them both together : nay, they must not only renounce their own Judgments, as soon as they are converted, but they must renounce the Authority and Vali-

Validity of those very Arguments whereby they are Converted, whether from Scripture, Reason, or Fathers; they must confess, that these Arguments are not a sufficient Foundation for a Divine Faith, without the Authority of the Church; for it is a dangerous thing to allow any Authority to Scripture or Fathers, without the Church, for that may make men Hereticks; and yet, I suppose, when Hereticks are converted by these Arguments, it must be the force of the Arguments, and not the Authority of the Church, which converts them, unless they believed the Authority of the Church before they were converted, and that was a little too early for it. Now methinks when Protestants turn Papists, as they pretend, from the conviction of their own Reason and Judgment, and as soon as they are converted, are taught, that there is no relying upon their own Judgment, and that the Reasons whereby they were converted, are not good in themselves without Church Authority; if it were possible for them ever to use their Reason more after such a Change, it would certainly make them disown their Conversion; which, it seems, was the effect of a very fallible Judgment, and very uncertain and inauthentick Reasons.

2. There is another pretence for these Disputes, which may seem to answer this difficulty, that the intention of these Disputes, is onely to lead you to the Infallible Church, and set you upon a Rock; and then it is very natural to renounce your own Judgment, when you have an infallible Guide. Our own Judgment then must bring us to the infallible Guide, and when we have found him, we have no farther use for our own Judgment. I answer,

1. Should we grant this, it puts an end to all the particular Disputes of Religion between us and the Church

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of *Rome* : We may dispute on about an Infallible Judge, but they cannot, with any fence, dispute with us about the particular Articles of Faith, such as Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Worship of Images, and the like ; for these are to be learnt onely from the Church, and cannot be proved by Scripture or Fathers, without the Authority of the Church. And if they would confess this, they would save us, and themselves, a great deal of trouble : For why should they be at the trouble of writing such Arguments, or we to answer them, when they themselves confess, that the Arguments are not good, unless they be confirmed by the Churches Authority ? I confess, I have often wondered to see such Volumes of Controversies written by the *Roman* Divines, for I could never imagine to what end they are writ. Is not their Faith wholly resolved into the Authority of the Church ? what need Reasons and Arguments then, which cannot work Faith in us ? Either these Arguments are sufficient to confirm the Articles of their Faith without the Authority of the Church, or they are not : If they are, then there is no need of Infallibility, since all the Articles of Faith are confirmed by such Reasons, as are a sufficient Foundation for Faith without it : And thus they give up all their Arguments for an Infallible Judge, from the necessity of such a Judge. If they be not, of what use are they ? does the Decision of the Church need to be confirmed by such Arguments ? If they are not good Arguments without the Authority of the Church, they can no more give Authority to the Church, than an Infallible Church can want any Authority, but its own : Are they to convince Hereticks ? But how if Hereticks should confute them ? If they be not in themselves good Arguments, they may be confuted ; and they know, by sad experience, that there are Hereticks,

tioks, as they call them, who have Wit and Learning enough to confute, what is to be confuted; and if they fall into such hands (which has been their hard fate of late) they are sure to be confuted. And, I doubt then, they had better have let them alone; for the Catholick Cause may suffer much in the Opinion of the World, when all their Arguments are confuted: All then that they can design by such Arguments, is to impose upon the Weak and Ignorant, when Learned Men are out of the way, which is no very commendable design; and that design will be spoiled too, if Unlearned Men do but learn to ask them the Question, Whether they build their Faith upon such Arguments? For then they must either quit the Authority of their Church, or the strength of their Arguments: The first reduces them to Protestant Uncertainty, for then they have no other Foundation for their Faith than Protestants have; which resolves it self into the Reasons and Arguments of Faith: The second puts an end to Disputing about these matters; for no man needs answer any Arguments, which the Disputant himself acknowledges not to be good.

2. There is nothing then left for Disputation, and the Exercise of our private Reason and Judgment, but the inquiry after an Infallible Judge. And here also, before you Dispute, it will be necessary to ask them, Whether the belief of an Infallible Judge, must be resolved into every mans private Judgment? whether it be not necessary to believe this with a Divine Faith? and whether there can be any Divine Faith without an Infallible Judge? Certainly if ever it be necessary to have an Infallible Faith, it is so to be infallibly assured of an Infallible Judge, because this is the foundation of all the rest: for though the Judge be Infallible, if I be not infallibly assured of this, I can never arrive to Infallibility in any thing; for

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I cannot be more certain, that his Determinations are Infallible, than I am, that he himself is Infallible; and if I have but a Moral assurance of this, I can be but morally assured of the rest; for the Building cannot be more firm than the Foundation is: and thus there is an end to all the *Roman* Pretexts to Infallibility. Now if we must believe the Infallibility of the Church, or Pope of *Rome*, with an infallible Faith, there is an end of Disputing; for no Reasons or Arguments, nor the Authority of the Scripture it self, without an infallible Judge, can beget an infallible Faith, according to the *Roman* Doctors: For this reason they charge the Protestant Faith with uncertainty, and will not allow it to be a Divine, but Humane Faith, though it is built upon the firmest Reasons, the best Authority, and the most express Scripture that can be had for any thing; but because we do not pretend to rely on the Authority of a Living Infallible Judge, therefore, forsooth, our Faith is Uncertain, Humane, and Fallible: and this, they say, makes an Infallible Judge necessary, because without him we have no Infallible Certainty of any thing.

Now if nothing but an Infallible Judge can be the Foundation of an Infallible Faith, then it is to no purpose to dispute about such a Judge; for Disputing is nothing else but weighing Reason against Reason, and Argument against Argument, or Scripture against the pretence of Scripture; but whoever gets the better of it this way, no Reasons, or Arguments, or Scripture Proofs can beget an Infallible Certainty, which is necessary in this case; and therefore this is all lost labour, and they do but put a trick upon you, when they pretend to dispute you into the belief of an Infallible Judge; for they themselves know, and must confess, if you ask them, that the best and most convincing Arguments cannot give us an Infallible

lible assurance of this matter; and yet unless we are infallibly assured of an infallible Judge, it is all to no purpose.

I can think but of one thing more, that can be said in this cause, viz. that it is manifestly unreasonable not to grant to the Church of *Rome*, that liberty which all men and Churches challenge, to dispute for themselves, and against their Adversaries: for when two men, or two Churches differ in matters of *Faith*, there is no other way to end the Controversie, but by disputing it out; whereas this Discourse will not allow them to dispute, nor any Protestants to dispute with them.

In answer to this, I grant, that the Charge is in a great measure true, and shews the absurdity of that Church and Religion, but does not disprove the reasonableness of this method. If men will embrace such a Religion as will not admit of disputing, it is their own and their Religions fault, not the fault of those men who will not dispute with them. Now a Religion which leaves no room for the exercise of Reason and private Judgment, leaves no place for Disputes neither; for how shall men dispute, who must not use their own Reason and Judgment? They ought not to dispute themselves, if they be true to their own Principles; and no man ought to dispute with them, who will not be laugh'd at by them, and by all the world: For to dispute without Reason, is a new way of disputing, (though it is the only thing that can justify the Romanists, and our late Disputants have been very careful to observe it;) and to dispute with Reason, is to use our private Reason in Religion, which is Protestant Heresie. Infallible men ought not to dispute, for that is to quit their Infallibility; and fallible men are very unwise to dispute with them, because no good can come of it: for Reason can never

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never confute their infallible Adversaries, nor make themselves infallible Believers.

But for the better understanding of this, I have two things to say. 1. That Papists may Dispute against Protestant Heresies, as they call them, but cannot dispute for their own Religion. 2. Protestants may dispute against Popish Doctrines, and to vindicate their own Faith, but cannot reasonably be disputed into Popery.

1. That Papists may dispute against Protestant Heresies, but cannot dispute for their own Religion: And the reason of this difference is plain, because Protestants allow of Reason and Discourse in matters of Religion; and therefore they may be confuted, if good Reasons can be produced against them: And here the Romanists may try their skill; but the Religion of *Rome* is not founded on Reason, but on Infallibility; and therefore is not the subject of a Dispute, because the truth and certainty of those Doctrines, is not resolved into the Reasons of them. They ought to alledge no other ground of their Faith, but the Infallibility of the Church; and they ought not to dispute about this neither: but those who will believe it may, and those who won't, may let it alone, because Infallibility is not to be proved by Reason; for Reason proves nothing infallibly, and therefore cannot give us an infallible certainty of the Churches Infallibility. But you will say, if they have other Arguments for the truth of their Faith, besides the Infallibility of the Church, why may they not urge those other Reasons and Arguments to convince those, who will not own the Churches Infallibility? I answer, Because whatever other Reasons they have, their Faith is not resolved into them; and therefore it is not honest in them to urge those

those for the Reasons of their Faith, which are not the Reasons why they believed: For let me ask them, Suppose they may have very good Reasons for some of their Doctrines, do they believe them merely because they are reasonable? If they say they do, then they believe just as Protestants believe; and there is no need of Infallibility, when men believe nothing but what is reasonable; and it is pity that so good a thing as Infallibility should serve only to support an unreasonable Faith.

Let me ask them again, Can they have a sufficient certainty, that these Reasons are good, without an infallible Judge? If they can, then the Faith of Protestants, which is grounded upon rational Evidences, may be very certain too, though it be not infallible; if they cannot, then their Reasons are none, since the very certainty of them is resolved into an infallible Authority; and therefore they are no certain Reasons, that is, not such as a man may rely on, when they are separated from Infallibility; and consequently they ought never to be urged apart from Infallibility, because they themselves do not think them good Reasons, that is, not a sufficient Foundation of Faith alone: and then I know not why they should be urged at all; for Infallibility can stand by it self, without the support of any Reasons.

I ask them again, Would they reject those Doctrines which they think they can prove by such evident Reasons, did they see those Reasons as evidently confuted? If they would not, then it is plain, they do not believe them for the sake of those Reasons; for if they did, they would reject them, when all their Reasons were confuted: They only impose upon the World with a pretence and flourish of Reason, and set up a Man of Straw for Protestants to shoot at; but whatever becomes

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comes of their Reasons, they have a safe Retreat into Infallibility.

If they believed any Doctrine because it is reasonable, if they will be true to themselves, they ought to reject all Doctrines, which are unreasonable, or contrary to Sense and Reason: He who believes for the sake of Reason, can never believe against it: for if Reason makes a thing credible, then what is unreasonable is incredible too; and we may as reasonably disbelieve what is confirmed by Reason, as believe what Reason contradicts: and therefore it is not very modest to hear men talk of Reason in any case, who can believe such an absurd and unreasonable Doctrine as Transubstantiation.

Now whatever Opinion Protestants have of Reason, Papists ought not to pretend to it, because their Faith has nothing to do with Reason: it is a Reproach to an infallible Church and infallible Faith, to need the supports of Reasons. And the truth is, those who will have nothing to do with Reason, Reason commonly has as little to do with them, but owes them a Shame, whenever they pretend to her; and therefore they had as good let her alone.

2. Protestants may dispute against Papist Doctrines, and to vindicate their own Faith, but they cannot reasonably be disputed into Popery. When Papists alledge Scripture, Reason, or humane Authority for any Doctrines of their Religion, Protestants, who allow of the use of Reason in Religion, may examine and confute them: when Papists dispute against Protestant Doctrines, Protestants are concerned to vindicate their own Faith, or to renounce it; but if a Protestant understands himself and his own Principles, all the Disputes in the World can never make him a Papist. For to be a Papist does not signify merely to believe Transubstantiation,

tion, or the Worship of Saints and Images, and such-like Popish Doctrines ; but to resolve our Faith into the Infallible Authority of the Church, and to believe whatever the Church believes, and for no other reason, but because the Church teaches it. This is the peculiar and distinguishing Character of the Church of *Rome*, which divides it from all other Churches and Sects of Christians ; and therefore our late Popish Writers are certainly in the right, to endeavour to bring the whole Controversie to this issue ; not to dispute about particular Doctrines, which follow on course, when once you believe the Church to be Infallible ; but to perswade men that the Church is Infallible, and that the Church of *Rome* is that Infallible Church. Now I say, no understanding Protestant can be disputed into this kind of Popery, and that for two plain Reasons. 1. Because no Arguments or Disputations can give me an infallible certainty of the Infallibility of the Church. 2. Because it is impossible by reason to prove, that men must not use their own Reason and Judgment in matters of Religion.

1. No Arguments can give me an infallible certainty of the Infallibility of the Church. The great Motive to any man to forsake the other Communions of Christians, and to go over to the Church of *Rome*, is to attain an Infallibility in Faith, which is a wonderful good thing, if it were to be had ; but though the Church of *Rome* were Infallible, and I should be convinced that there were some reason to think so, yet unless I can be infallibly assured of it, my Faith is still as fallible as the Protestant Faith is ; and I am no nearer to Infallibility in the Church of *Rome*, than in the Church of *England*. For as I observed before, unless I can have an infallible certainty of the Infallibility of the Church, I can have

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no Infallibility at all: Though the Church were infallible in all her Decrees, I can never be infallibly certain of the truth of her Decrees, unless I be infallibly certain that she is Infallible. It is a known Rule in Logic, that the Conclusion must follow the weaker part, and therefore it is impossible to infer an infallible Faith from the fallible Belief of the Churches Infallibility.

And yet the best Reasons in the World (which is all that disputing can do, to offer Reasons for our Faith) cannot give us an infallible certainty, because Reason it self is not an infallible Principle, at least the Church of *Rome* dares not own, that any mans private Reason and Judgment is infallible; for then Protestants may set up for Infallibility as well as Papists. No man, by Reason and Argument, can arrive at a greater Certainty than Protestants may have, and yet no man can arrive at greater certainty in the way of disputing, than Reason and Argument can give him; and then a Popish Convert, who is reasoned into the belief of Infallibility, though he has changed his Opinion, yet has no more Infallibility now, than he had when he was a Protestant. Protestants, without an Infallible Church, may have all the Certainty that Reason and Argument can give them; and a Convert has no greater Certainty (if he have no more than what Disputing could give him) for his Infallible Church: And how is it possible then, that a reasonable man can be disputed out of the Church of *England* into the Church of *Rome*, upon such vain hopes of a more infallible certainty? for let him go where he will, if he be lead to *Rome* it self by his own fallible Reason and Judgment, (which is the only Guide he has in disputing) he will be the same fallible Creature that ever he was. But to represent this the more familiarly, let us have a short Conference between a sturdy Protestant, and a new Convert.

Prot.

Prot. O, my old Friend ! I am glad to meet you, for I have longed to know what change you find in your self, since you are become an Infallible Believer.

Conv. I find, Sir, what I expected, very great ease and satisfaction of mind, since I am delivered from all doubtful Disputes in such an important concernment as the salvation of my Soul, and have a firm and sure Rock to trust to, such an Infallible Church as cannot err it self, nor mis-guide me.

Prot. This, I confess, is a very great advantage ; and therefore as we have been formerly of the same Church and Communion, I would be glad to keep you company also in so advantageous a change. Pray therefore tell me, how you came to be so infallibly persuaded of the Infallibility of your Church.

Conv. With all my heart ; and I shall be very glad of such company : and indeed there are such powerful Reasons for it, as I am sure must convince so free and ingenuous a mind, as you always carry about with you. For Christ has promised to build his Church upon St. Peter, and that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

Prot. Hold, good Sir ! Reason ! Are you got no farther than Reason yet ? Will Reason ever make a man infallible ? I have considered all the Reasons that are used to this purpose, and know what to say to them, if that were our busines ; and the truth is, I have a great deal of unanswerable Reason, to stay where I am ; and am a little surprized, to think that you, or any man, should leave the Church of *England* for want of Reason, or go to the Church of *Rome* for it : and therefore pray tell me the Secret, for there must be something else to make Converts, besides Reason.

Conv. Then I perceive you take me for a Knave, who
D 2 have

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have changed my Religion for base secular Ends, without Reason.

Prot. You know that best ; but that was not my meaning : but the reason of my Question was, because you changed for an infallible Faith. Now if you rely still upon Reason, I don't see how your Faith is more infallible than mine : for I am as confident, as you can be, that I have as good Reasons for my Faith, and in my opinion much better, than you have for yours.

Conv. I beg your pardon for that : I rely upon the Authority of an Infallible Church, you trust to your private Reason.

Prot. And I beg your pardon, Sir : for I rely on the Authority of Scripture, which is as infallible as your Church.

Conv. But you rely on your own Reason for the Authority of Scripture, and those particular Doctrines you draw from it.

Prot. And you rely on your own Reason and Judgment, for the Infallibility of your Church, and consequently of all the Doctrines of it ; and therefore your infallible Faith is as much resolved into your own fallible Judgment, as the Protestant Faith is : so that the difference between us is not, that your Faith is infallible, and ours fallible ; for they are both alike, call it what you will, fallible or infallible ; but the Dispute is, whether your Reason and Judgment, or ours, be best : and therefore if you think your Reason better than ours, you did well to change ; but if you changed your Church, hoping to grow more infallible by it, you were miserably mistaken, and may return to us again : for we have more rational Certainty than you have, and you have no more infallible Certainty than we. You think you are reasonably assured that your Church is infallible, and then

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then you take up your Religion upon trust from your Church, without, and many times against Sense and Reason, according as it happens ; so that you have onely a general assurance of the Infallibility of your Church, and that no greater than Protestants pretend to in other cases, *viz.* the certainty of Reason and Argument ; but have not so much as a rational assurance of the truth of your particular Doctrines ; that if you be mistaken about the Infallibility of your Church, you must be miserably mistaken about every thing else, which you have no other evidence for. But now we are in general assured, that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and in particular are assured, that the Faith, which we profess, is agreeable to Scripture, or expresly contained in it, and does not contradict either Sense or Reason, nor any other Principle of Knowledge. So that we have as much assurance of every Article of our Faith, as you have of the Infallibility of your Church ; and therefore have at least double and treble the assurance that you have. But if you know the Reasons of your Conversion, I desire to know of you, What made you think, that you wanted Certainty in the Church of *England* ?

Conv. Because with you every man is left to his own private Reason and Judgment, the effects of which, are very visible in that infinite variety of Sects among you, which shews what an uncertain thing your Reason is, that so few judge alike of the power and validity of the same Reasons.

Prot. And were you not sensible at the same time, that you were left to your own Reason and Judgment, when you turned Papist ? Are you not sensible, that men do as little agree about your Reasons for Infallibility, as they do about any Protestant Reasons ? Do not I know the Reasons alledged by you for the Infallibility of

your

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your Church as well as you do : And do we not still differ about them ? And is not this as much an Argument of the uncertainty of those Reasons, which make you a Papist, that they cannot make me a Papist, as the dissent of Protestants in other matters, is of the uncertainty of their Reasons ? Could you indeed be infallibly assured of the Infallibility of your Church, I grant you would have the advantage of us, but while you found your belief of Infallibility upon such an uncertain Principle, as you think Reason is ; if certainty had been your only aim, you might as well have continued in the Church of *England*, as have gone over to *Rome*.

This abundantly shews what a ridiculous thing it is for a Protestant to be disputed out of his Church and Religion, upon a pretence of more infallible certainty in the Church of *Rome* : Were they indeed inspired with an infallible assurance, that the Church of *Rome* is Infallible, there might be some pretence for this ; but an Infallibility which has no better foundation than mens private Reason, and private Judgment, is no Infallibility, but has all the same uncertainties, which they charge on the Protestant Faith, and a great deal more, because it is not founded upon such great and certain Reasons.

The plain truth is, men may be taught from their Infancy to believe the Church Infallible, and when they are grown up, may take it, without examination, for a first and self-evident Principle, and think this an infallible Faith : but men who understand the difference between the evidence of Reason and Infallibility, can never found an infallible Faith on Reason, nor think that a man who is reasomed into the belief of the Infallibility of the Church, is more infallible in his Faith, than a Protestant is : And such a man will see no reason to quit the Church of *England*, for the sake of an infallible Faith ; for though they

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they had an infallible Guide, yet Reason cannot give them an infallible assurance of it, but can rise no higher at most than a Protestant certainty.

2. It is impossible also by Reason to prove, that men must not use their own Reason and Judgment in matters of Religion. If any man should attempt to persuade you of this, ask him, Why then he goes about to dispute with you about Religion? whether men can dispute without using their own Reason and Judgment? whether they can be convinced without it? whether his offering to dispute with you against the use of your Reason, does not prove him ridiculous and absurd? For if you must not use your Reason, why does he appeal to your Reason? And whether you should not be as ridiculous and absurd as he, if by his Reasons and Arguments you should be persuaded to condemn the use of Reason in Religion? Which would be the same act to do, what you condemn, to use your Reason when you condemn it. If you must not use your Reason and private Judgment, then you must not by any Reasons be persuaded to condemn the use of Reason; for to condemn is an act of Judgment, which you must not use in matters of Religion. So that this is a point which no man can dispute against, and which no man can be convinced of by disputing, without the reproach of self-contradiction.

This is an honourable way of silencing these troublesome and clamorous Disputants, to let them see, that their Principles will not allow of Disputing, and that some of their Fundamental Doctrines, which they impose upon the World, are a direct contradiction to all Disputes, for the very admitting of a Dispute, confutes them; and the meanest man may quickly say more in this Cause, than their greatest Disputants can answer.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Concerning the several Topicks of Dispute.

S E C T. I.

Concerning Arguments from Reason.

2. **T**HE next Direction relates to the Topicks from which they Dispute; which are, either Reason, Scripture, or the Authority of the ancient Fathers and Writers of the Christian Church; for the infallible Authority of Popes, or General Councils, is the thing in dispute between us, and therefore can prove nothing till that be first proved by something else.

1. To begin then with Reason: Now we do allow of Reason in matters of Religion; and our Adversaries pretend to use it, when they think it will serve their turn, and rail at it, and despise it, when it is against them.

Not that we make Natural Reason the Rule or the Measure of our Faith; for to believe nothing but what may be proved by Natural Reason, is to reject Revelation, or to destroy the necessity of it; For what use is there of a Revelation, or at least what necessity of it, if nothing must be revealed, but what might have been known by Natural Reason without Revelation; or at least what Natural Reason can fully comprehend, when it is revealed? But though we believe such things, when they are revealed by God, which Natural Reason could never have taught us, and which Natural Reason does not see the depths and mysteries of; and therefore do not stint our

our Faith, and confine it within the narrow bounds of Natural Reason ; yet we use our Reason to distinguish a true from a counterfeit Revelation, and we use Reason to understand a Revelation ; and we Reason and Argue from revealed Principles, as we do from the Principles of Natural Knowledge : As from that Natural Principle, that there is but one God, we might conclude, without a Revelation, that we must worship but one God : so from that revealed Doctrine of one Mediator between God and Man, we may as safely conclude, that we must make our Applications, and offer up our Prayers and Petitions to God, only by this one Mediator ; and so in other cases.

Now to direct Protestants how to secure themselves from being imposed on by the fallacious Reasoning of *Roman* Priests : I shall take notice of some of the chief faults in their way of Reasoning ; and when these are once known, it will be an easie matter for men of ordinary understandings, to detect their Sophistry.

1. As first, we must allow of no Reason against the Authority of plain and express Scripture : This all men must grant, who allow the Authority of Scripture to be superiour to Natural Reason ; for though Scripture cannot contradict plain, and necessary, and eternal Reasons, *i. e.* what the universal Reason of Mankind teaches for a necessary and eternal Truth ; yet God may command such things, as we see no Natural Reason for, and forbid such things as we see no Natural Reason against ; nay, it may be, when we think there are plausible Reasons against what God commands, and for what he forbids : But in all such cases a Divine Law must take place against our uncertain Reasonings ; for we may reasonably conclude, that God understands the Reasons and Natures of things, better than we do.

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As for instance, when there is such an express Law as, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*: No reason in the World can justifie the Worship of any other Being, good or bad Spirits; besides God, because there is an express Law against it, and no Reason can take place against a Law. The like may be said of the second Commandment, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, nor the likehood of any thing which is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them*. Which is so express a Law against Image-Worship, that no Reason must be admitted for it. No man need to trouble himself to answer the Reasons urged for such Practices, for no Reasons ought to be allowed, nor any Dispute admitted against such express Laws.

This, I suppose, all men will grant: but then the difficulty is, What is an express Law? For the Sence of the Law is the Law; and if there may be such a Sence put on the words, as will reconcile these Reasons with the Law, we must not say then, that such Reasons are against the Law, when, though they may be against the Law in some sence, yet they are consistent with other sences of the Law; and it is most likely, that is the true sence of the Law, which has the best reason on its side.

It must be confessed, there is some truth in this, when the words of the Law are capable of different sences, and Reason is for one sence, and the other fence against Reason, there it is fit, that a plain and necessary Reason should expound the Law: but when the Law is not capable of such different sences, or there is no such reason as makes one sence absurd, and the other necessary, the Law must be expounded according to the most plain and obvious

obvious signification of the Words, though it should condemn that, which we think, there may be some reason for, or at least no reason against ; for otherwise it is an easie matter to expound away all the Laws of God. To be sure all men must grant, that such Reasons as destroy the Law, or put an absurd or impossible fence on it, are against the Law, and therefore must be rejected, how plausible soever they appear: As for instance, Some there are, who to excuse the Church of *Rome* from Idolatry in Worshipping Saints, and Angels, and the Virgin *Mary*, positively affirm, that no man can be guilty of Idolatry, who worships one Supreme God ; as a late Author expresly teaches : *As for the Invocation of Saints, unless they Worship them as the Supreme God, the Charge of Idolatry is an idle word ; and the Adoration it self, which is given to them as Saints, is a direct Protestation against Idolatry, because it supposes a Superior Deity ; and that Supposition cuts off the very being of Idolatry.* Now, not to examine what force there is in this Reason, our present enquiry is onely, How this agrees with the first Commandment, *Thou shalt have none other Gods before me* ? before my Face, as it is in the Hebrew : Which supposes an acknowledgment of the Supreme God, together with other Gods ; for otherwise, though they Worship other Gods, they do not do it before the Face of God, while they see him, as it were, present before them : to worship other Gods in the presence of the Supreme God, or before his Face, as that Phrase signifies, is to worship them together with him ; and therefore this is well expressed by the Septuagint, by πλεις, besides me ; which supposes that they Worshipped him too. And our Saviour expounds this Law by, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* So that this Reason, That there can be no Idolatry, where the Lord

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engaging the
Test, p. 133.

Matth. 4.10.

Jehovah is Worshipped as the Supreme God, contradicts the very letter of this Law.

Ibid. p. 80.

How then does this Author get rid of the first Commandment? Truly by laying it all aside: for he gives this as the whole Sence of the first Commandment, That God *enjoyns the Worship of himself, who, by his Almighty Power, had delivered them from their Agyptian Bondage.* But is this all that these words, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,* signifies? The Worship of God indeed is supposed in them; but the express words of the Law, are not for the Worship of the Lord *Jehovah*, but against the Worship of any other Gods, before him, or besides him: But according to our new Expositor, this is no part of the Law, though according to the express words, it is the principal, if not the whole meaning of it.

If this Argument be good, *viz.* That Idolatry is nothing else, but the Worship of other Beings besides the Lord *Jehovah*, as Supreme Gods, then *other Gods*, in this Commandment, must signifie other Supreme Gods; and then the Commandment runs thus: Thou shalt have no other *supreme Gods* before me. Now this is a very absurd fence, because it supposes, that men may Believe and Worship more Supreme Gods than one; for if there can be but one Supreme God, and by Gods in the Commandment, be meant Supreme Gods, then it is absurd to forbid any man to have other Supreme Gods, because no man can acknowledge two Supremes: It should have been, Thou shalt not have any other *God* besides me, not *Gods*: For tho' it had been possible for them to have acknowledged some other God to be Supreme, and rejected the Lord *Jehovah* from being Supreme, yet they could not have other Supreme Gods. But it is evident, that God here forbids the Worship of a Plurality of Gods, of other Gods; and therefore they could not all be Supreme Gods.

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But suppose it had been *any other God* in the single number, yet to understand this of a Supreme God, is very absurd ; because there is no other supreme God, but the Lord *Jehovah*, and those who worship but one Supreme God, worship him, and none else. For a supreme God is not to be pointed at, is not to be distinguished by his Person or Features, as one man is distinguished from another : indeed a Prince may properly say to his Subjects, You shall own none but me for your King, because they know his Person, and can distinguish him from all other men. But the *Jews* never saw God, nor any likeness or similitude of him ; they were not acquainted with his Person, nor could they distinguish him from other Gods, by any personal Characters ; they knew him onely by his Notion and Character of the Supreme Being, who made the World and all things in it, and brought them by a mighty Hand out of the Land of *Egypt*. Now does it not sound very strange, that the Supreme God, who is known onely by this Character, that he is Supreme, the Great Creator and Sovereign Lord of the World, should make a Law, that we should worship no other Supreme God but himself ; when it is absolutely impossible, that he who worships a Supreme and Sovereign God, should worship any other God but himself, because he alone is the Supreme God ; and therefore those who worship the Supreme God, under this Notion as Supreme, worship him, and no other Being. So that if we will make sense of it, the meaning of the first Commandment is plainly this : Thou shalt not give Divine Honours to any other Beings, as to inferior Gods, as the Idolatrous Practice of the World now is, which worships a great many things for Gods ; but thou shalt worship onely one Supreme and Sovereign Being, the Maker and Sovereign Lord of the

the World, which is I my self, the Lord *Jehovah*, who brought thee out of the Land of *Ægypt*, out of the House of Bondage. When the Supream God commands us to worship himself, the meaning must be, that we pay our Worship and Adorations to a Supream Being, considered as Supream ; and he who worships such a Supream Being, worships the true God, whom we can distinguish from false Gods only by this Character, that he is Supream : And when this Supream Being forbids us to worship any other Gods, it must signify, that we must worship nothing which is not Supream, nor that we must not believe that which is not Supream to be the Supream God ; which would be ridiculous Nonsense, to command them not to own that Being for the Supream God, which they know not to be Supream.

But it may be said, that the Heathens did worship some Beings, who were not the Supream God, as Supream, as this Author tells us, they did the Sun, though no body told him so, that I know of ; for *Macrobius*, whom he cites in this Cause, does not say, that they worshipped the Sun as Supream God, though he says that most of the Gods they worshipped did signify the Sun : But suppose the Sun were the chief Object of their Worship, and look'd on as the greatest and most principal God, this does not prove that they worshipped it as the Supream God : for these are two very different things to be worshipped as the chief God, which such a People have, and to be worshipped under the Notion of Absolutely Supream. Some Pagan Idolaters might worship a Creature as their chief and greatest Deity, and might call it their great, their greatest God, because it is the greatest God they have ; their King and Prince of Gods, as Mr. *Selden* tells us, they called the Sun, as being the chief Planet who directed and governed the Influen-

Influences of the rest, not as the Maker of the World, as this Author asserts: But those who direct their Worship to a Supream and Sovereign Being, considered as absolutely Supream, infinite in all Perfections, the Maker and Governour of the whole World, can under this Notion worship no other but the Lord *Jehovah*, because there is no other Supream God but he. Which shews, that the first Commandment is so far from forbidding the Worship of other Supream Gods, besides the Lord *Jehovah*, that to make sense of it, these *other Gods* must be expounded not of Supream, but inferiour Deities; and it is so far from being the Notion of Idolatry, to worship other Supream Beings, besides the Lord *Jehovah*, that it is Nonsense to suppose it. The true Notion of Idolatry in the first Commandment, is to worship some Inferiour Beings, together with the Supream God: It is a grosser sort of Idolatry, when men wholly neglect the Worship of the Supream God, and worship some Creature for their greatest and chiefeſt God; and it is worse ſtill, when men worship bad Spirits, than when they worship good Spirits, together with the Supream God: but it is evident, this Law condemns the Worship of any Inferiour Beings, though we do also worship the Supream God.

I ſhall give but one Instance more of this nature, and that is, the ſecond Commandment, which in ſuch express words forbids the Worship of all Images, of what kind or nature ſoever. Now whatever Reasons men may imagine there are for the Worship of Images, they can be of no force againſt an express Law: And if theſe words be not express, *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any graven image, &c.* I despair of ever ſeeing an express Law. For had God intended by this Law to forbide the Worship of any Images, under what notion or respects ſoever,

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soever, I would desire to know what more significant and comprehensive words could have been used to have declared his mind, unless he had expressly rejected those false Interpretations, which the Patrons of Image-Worship have since invented, but were never thought on at that time.

Ibid. p. 30.

The same Author, whom I have so often mentioned, having expounded the first Commandment only to a positive sense, not to forbid the Worship of other Gods, but only to command the Worship of the Lord *Jehovah*, expressly contrary to the very letter and plain sense of the Law; agreeably to this, he makes the second Commandment only to forbid the Worship of Idols or false Gods, and not that neither, unless they take them for the Supreme Deity. His words are these:

In the next place, he forbids them the Worship of all Idols, i. e. as himself describes them, the likeness or similitude of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth. A plain and indeed a logical definition this, that Idolatry is giving the Worship of the Supreme God to any created, corporeal, or visible Deity, or any thing that can be represented by an Image, which nothing but corporeal Beings can, and to suppose such a Being the Supreme Deity, is the only true and proper Idolatry. Now let any man judge, whether this be not such a gloss as utterly destroys the Text.

As for his Worship of *Idols*, there is no such word in the Law, but *Images*, *Likenesses*, *Similitudes*; but yet I will not dispute about this, for an *Idol* does not only signify a false God, but the *Images* either of false Gods, or false and corporeal *Images* of the true God. For the *Idols of the Heathens*, as the Psalmist tells us, *are silver, and gold, the work of men's hands*; which can relate to nothing but *Images* and *Pictures*: for corporeal Deities, which

which were made by God, are not the work of mens hands.

Now *Idoltry*, he says, is giving the *Worship of the Supreme God to any created, corporeal, or visible Deity, or any thing which can be represented by an Image, which nothing but corporeal Beings can.* Now how plain and logical soever this definition of Idolatry be, there is not a word of it in the Text. That forbids not the Worship of any created, corporeal, or visible Deity, (which is forbid in the first Commandment) but only the Worship of *Images, the likeness of any thing in Heaven, or Earth, or in the Water under the Earth.* Now an Image differs from the thing whose Image it is. And it is a very strange Exposition of the second Commandment, which forbids nothing else but the Worship of Images, to take no notice of the Worship of Images as forbid in it. According to this gloss upon the Law, a man may worship ten thousand Images and Pictures, so he do not worship any visible and corporeal Deity, and not break this Commandment; which I think is not to give the sense of the Law, but to expound it away.

But how does the Worship of corporeal and visible Deities, and nothing else, appear to be forbid by this Law, which mentions nothing at all but the likeness of things in Heaven, and Earth, and Water? Why, our learned Author imagines that no Images can be made, but only for corporeal and visible Deities, because nothing but corporeal Beings can be represented by an Image: which Conceit is worth its weight in Gold; for it evidently proves, that there are no Pictures of God the Father, nor of the Trinity, in the Church of *Rome*, because they are not corporeal Deities; and therefore cannot be represented by an Image: so miserably have all Travellers been mistaken, who tell us of a great many such Pictures, and not very decent ones neither. There

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can indeed be no Picture or Image to represent the likeness and similitude of an incorporeal God, but yet the visible parts of Heaven and Earth, and the visible Creatures in them, may be represented by Images, and the Images of such visible things may be made the symbolical representations of invisible and incorporeal Deities ; and such invisible and incorporeal Deities may be worshipped in the likeness and similitude of corporeal things ; and then I am sure to forbid the Worship of Images may signify something more than meerly to forbid the Worship of some visible and corporeal Deities ; for it may signify the Worship of invisible and incorporeal Deities, by visible Images. But I perceive he imagined, that when God forbade them to make and worship the likeness of any thing in Heaven, in Earth, or in the Waters under the Earth, he only forbade the Worship of those Beings, whose likeness or Images they made ; whereas all men know, that those very Idolaters who worshipped these glorious parts of the Creation ; did not represent them in their proper likenesses and figures ; and that those who worshipped invisible and incorporeal Beings, did it by material and invisible figures, which plainly proves, that when God forbade the Worship of Images, he had not respect meerly to visible and corporeal Deities, but forbade Image-worship, whether they were the Images of visible and corporeal, or of invisible and incorporeal Deities.

Our Author durst not say (as the Roman Advocates do) that God in the second Commandment only forbids the Worship of Images as Gods ; which is such glorious Nonsense, that he could not digest it : and therefore he supposes, that God does not forbid the Worship of Images at all, but only of such Corporeal Deities as may be represented by Images ; which is a more gentle way

way of discarding the second Commandment, than to leave it out of their Books of Devotions. But if he will stand to this, he condemns the Popish Worship of dead Men and Women, for they are corporeal Deities; nay, of Christ himself, considered as a man, who might be represented by an Image or Picture. And thus I doubt he has done the Church of *Rome* no kindness at all: for this is a Demonstration against the Worship of Saints, and the Virgin *Mary*, because they are created, corporeal, and visible Beings, who may be represented by Images; and he has thought of an Argument against Images, which neither the Scripture, nor the Church of *Rome*, know any thing of: The Church of *Rome* thinks it a good Argument for the Images of Christ, and the Saints, and the Virgin *Mary*, that they are representable by Images and Pictures; and therefore there can be no hurt in such Images: And the Scripture perpetually urges that Argument against Images, that the Deity cannot be represented by an Image; but neither of these Arguments are good, if our Author's Notion be good: For then to worship such corporeal Beings, as may be represented by Images, is to worship corporeal Gods, which is Idolatry. And there is no danger in the Images of an incorporeal Deity, which cannot represent the God for which they are made; for whatever the Image be, this is not to worship a corporeal God, since we know him to be incorporeal, and therefore it is not Idolatry.

But he has one Salvo still to excuse those from Idolatry, who worship even corporeal Gods, (for he speaks not a word of worshipping the Images of any Gods) that they are not Idolaters, unless they worship such corporeal Gods, supposing them to be the Supreme Deity; whereby he explains what he means by giving

the Worship of the Supream God to any created, corporeal, or visible Deity ; viz. to think such a God to be the Supream God, is to worship it as Supream. And thus those who worshipped the Sun, not thinking him to be the Supream God, but the chief Minister of Providence under the Supream God, with reference to this Lower World, as most of the Sun-Idolaters seemed to do, were not Idolaters. Nay, very few of the Philosophers, though they worshipped their Country Gods, were Idolaters, because they neither did not believe them to be any Gods, or at least not to be the Supream ; as it is certain *Socrates*, and *Plato*, and *Tully*, and many others, did not.

But it is plain, that to worship the Supream God, is not merely to suppose him to be Supream ; for St. Paul tells us, that there were some, who knew God, but did not worship him as God : and therefore there is an external and visible Worship, which is due to the Supream God, as well as the belief, that he is Supream. And if this Worship which is due to the Supream God, be given to any Being which we our selves do not believe to be Supream, we are Idolaters ; and then though we do not believe the Gods we worship to be Supream, any kind or degree of Religious Worship (or which is used as an Act of Religion, not as common and civil Respects) is Idolatry. This Commandment brings it as low as merely bowing to an Image, and then I doubt no other Act of Religious Worship can escape the Charge of Idolatry.

But though it is not my business to pursue this Author, I cannot pass over the very next Paragraph, where he observes, *Though there may seem to be two sorts of it* ; (this Idolatry in worshipping Corporeal Beings) *First, either to worship a material and created Being, as the Supream Deity* :

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Deity : Or secondly, to ascribe any corporeal form or shape to the Divine Nature, yet in result, both are but one ; for to ascribe unto the Supreme God any corporeal form, is the same thing as to worship a created Being, for so is every corporeal Substance. Which is a very wonderful Paragraph : for thus some of the Ancient Christians, who believed God to be Corporeal, (as Tertullian himself did) but yet did not believe that he was created, but that he created all things, were as very Idolaters, as those who worshipped the Sun or Earth : And I would gladly know, who those men are, who ascribe unto the Supreme God, a Corporeal form, and yet think, that he was created. I am apt to think they differ a little in their Philosophy from our Author, and did believe that a Corporeal Supreme Deity might be uncreated ; and then, I suppose, there may be some difference also between their worshipping a Corporeal Created, and a Corporeal Uncreated God, at least if mens Belief and Opinions of things makes a difference, as this Author must allow ; for, if I understand him, to worship a Corporeal Being, without believing it to be Supreme, does not make them Idolaters, but if they believe it Supreme, it does ; and by the same reason, thô to worship a Supreme Corporeal Created Deity (if that be not a contradiction) be Idolatry, yet to worship a Corporeal, which they believe to be an Uncreated Deity, is no Idolatry : For though I believe, with our Author, that all Corporeal Beings are created, yet, I suppose, those who believed God to be Corporeal, did not believe, that every thing, that is Corporeal, was created.

So that the first and second Commandments are very plain and express Laws, the one forbidding the Religious Worship of all inferior Beings, Corporeal, or Incorporeal, with or without the Supreme God, or forbidding the Worship of all other Beings but the Supreme God ; the other

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other forbidding the External and Visible Worship of any material Images and Pictures: And though I am certain, there can be no good Arguments to justify such Practices as are forbid by these Laws, yet no Christian need trouble himself to answer them, for be they what they will, it is a sufficient answer to them, to say, They are against an express Law.

2. Another Rule is, in matters of Faith, or in such things as can be known onely by Revelation, Not to build our Faith upon any Reason, without the Authority of Scripture. That this may be the better understood, I shall briefly shew what these things are, which can be known onely by Revelation, and therefore which every Protestant should demand a plain Scripture-proof for, before he believes them, whatever Reasons are pretended for them: As,

1. Whatever depends solely upon the Will and Appointment of God, which God might do, or might not do, as he pleased. In such cases our onely inquiry is, What God has done? And this can be known onely by Revelation; for Reason cannot discover it, because it depends not upon any necessary Reason, but on the free and arbitrary appointment of God: as St. Paul tells us, *That as no man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of man, that is in him; so no man knoweth the things of God, but the spirit of God:* That is, as no man can tell the secret thoughts and purposes of a man, nor how he will determine himself in matters of his own free Choice and Election: so what depends purely upon the Will of God, is known onely to the Spirit of God, and therefore can be made known to us only by Revelation.

Many such things there are in dispute between us and the Church of *Rome*, which depend so intirely upon the Will of God, that they may be, or may not be, as God pleases. As for instance:

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No man, nor company of men can be Infallible, unless God bestow Infallibility on them; for Infallibility is not a natural Endowment, but a supernatural Gift; and therefore no reason can prove, the Bishop of *Rome*, or a General Council to be Infallible. God may make them Infallible if he pleases, and if he pleases, he may not do it: and therefore our only inquiry here is, What God has done? And this can be known only by Revelation.

Thus that the Church of *Rome* only, and those Churches that are in Communion with her, should be the Catholick Church, and the Bishop of *Rome* the Oecumenical Pastor, and the Center of Catholick Unity must depend wholly upon Institution, for nothing but the Will and Appointment of God, can give this Preheminence and Prerogative to the Church and Bishop of *Rome*, above all other Churches and Bishops. No reason then can prove this without plain and express Scripture to prove such an Institution.

Were there nothing in Scripture or Reason to prove, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead, yet no Reason can prove, that it is: For the vertue and acceptation of a Sacrifice, intirely depends upon the will and appointment of God, at least so far, that no Sacrifice can be Propitiatory without it: And therefore there can be no other proof, that the Mass is a propitiatory Sacrifice, but the declaration of God's Will and Institution, that it shall be so.

2. Those things also can be proved only by Scripture, which are done in the other World, which is an unknown and invisible State to us, any farther than the Scripture has revealed it: and men may more reasonably expect to find out, by the power of Reason, what is done every day

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day in *China*, or the most remote and unknown parts of the Earth, than what is done in the other World. And then, there are a great many things wherein you must reject all pretences to Reason, any farther than it is supported by plain and evident Scripture. As to give some instances of this also :

1. No Reason can prove, that there is such a place as Purgatory, for that is an invisible place in the other World ; if there be any such place, no man living ever saw it ; and then how can any man know, that there is such a place, unless it be revealed ? To attempt to prove that there is such a place as Purgatory, meerly by Reason, is just as if a man, who had some general notion of an Inquisition, but never had any credible information, that there actually was any such place, should undertake to prove, by Reason, that there is and must be such a place as the Inquisition ; though he would happen to guess right, yet it is certain his Reasons signified nothing ; for some Countries have the Inquisition, and some have not ; and therefore there might have been no Inquisition any where, how strong soever the Reasons for it might be thought to be. We may as well describe, by the power of Reason, the World in the Moon, and what kind of Inhabitants there are there, by what Laws they live, what their Business, what their Pleasures, and what their Punishments are, as pretend to prove, that there is a Purgatory in the next World, for they are both equally unknown to us ; and if Reason cannot prove that there is such a place as Purgatory, nothing else which relates to Purgatory, can be proved by Reason.

2. Nor can we know what the state of Saints in Heaven is, without a Revelation, for no man has been there to see : the state of the other World is such things as neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into

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into the Heart of man to conceive. And then I cannot understand how we should know these things by Reason.

The Church of *Rome* teaches us to Pray to Saints, and to flie to their Help and Aid : And there are a great many things which a wise man would desire to know, before he can think it fit to pray to them ; which yet it is impossible to know, without a Revelation : as, Whether the Saints we direct our Prayers to, be in Heaven ? Which is very fit to be known, and yet can certainly be known but of a very few of that vast number, that are worshipped in the Church of *Rome* ; the Apostles of Christ, and the Virgin *Mary*, we have reason to believe are in Heaven, and we may hope well of others, but we cannot know it : No man can see who is there, and bare hope, how strong soever, is not a sufficient foundation for such a Religious Invocation of unknown Saints, who, after all our persuasions that they are in Heaven, may be in Hell, or at least in Purgatory, where they want our Prayers, but are not in a condition to interceed for us.

Thus it is very necessary to know, what the power and authority of the Saints in Heaven is, before we pray to them ; for it is to no purpose to pray to them, unless we know they can help us. The Council of *Trent* recommends to us the Invocation of Saints, as of those who reign with Christ in Heaven, and therefore have power and authority to present our Petitions, and procure those Blessings we pray for. And if I could find any such thing in Scripture, it would be a good reason to pray to them ; but all the Arguments in the World cannot prove this without a Revelation : they may be in Heaven, and not be Mediators and Advocates.

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is to no purpose to pray to them, unless we are sure, that they hear our Prayers; and this nothing but a Revelation can assure us of; for no natural Reason can assure us, that mere Creatures, as the most glorious Saints in Heaven are, can hear our soft, nay mental Prayers, at such a vast distance, as there is between Heaven and Earth.

Such matters as these, which Reason can give us no assurance of, if they be to be proved at all, must be proved by Scripture; and therefore as the pretence of proving these things by Reason is vain, so no Protestant should be so vain, as to trouble himself to answer such Reasons.

But you'll say, The Papists do pretend to prove these things by Scripture. I answer, So far it is very well; and I onely desire our Protestant to keep them to their Scripture-Proofs, and to reject all their Reasons; and then let them see, what they can make of it. As for Scripture-Proofs, they shall be considered presently.

3. More particularly you must renounce all such Reasons, as amount to no more than some May-bes and Possibilities; for what only may be, may not be, and every thing that is possible, is not actually done. As for instance: When you ask these men, How you can be assured, that the Saints in Heaven can hear our Prayers? They offer to shew you by what ways this may be done: They may see all things in the Glass of the Trinity, and thereby know all things, that God knows. Which is but a may-be; and yet it is a more likely may-be, that there is no such Glass as gives the Saints a comprehensive view of all that is in God. Well, but God can reveal all the Prayers to the Saints, which are made to them on Earth. Very right! we dispute not God's Power to do this, but desire to know, whether he does

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it or not ; and his bare power to do it, does not prove that : But the Saints in Heaven may be informed of what is done on Earth, by those who go from hence thither, or by those Ministering Angels who frequently pass between Heaven and Earth : but this may not be too ; and if it were, it would not answer the purposes of Devotion : for in this way of intercourse the News may come too late to the Saints, to whom we pray, for the Saints to do us any good : as, suppose a man pray to the Virgin *Mary* in the hour of Death, or in a great Storm at Sea, the man may be dead, and Ship wrackt before the Virgin knows of his Prayers, and may carry the first news of it into the other World himself. Such kind of May-bes and Conjectures as these, are a very sorry Foundation for an Infallible Church to build her Faith on.

4. You must reject also all such Reasons in Divine and Spiritual things, as are drawn from Earthy Patterns. A considering man would a little wonder, how a Papist should so punctually determine what is done in the other World, without speaking with any one who has seen it, and without having any Revelation about it, as I have already observed ; but whoever considers many of their Arguments, will soon find that they make this World the Pattern of the next, and reason from Sensible to Spiritual things.

Thus the true Foundation of Saint-Worship is, that men judge of the Court of Heaven by the Courts of earthly Princes : The most effectual way to obtain any Request of our Prince, is to address our selves to some powerful Favourite ; and they take it for granted, that all Saints and Angels in Heaven are such Favourites, and can obtain whatever they ask ; and therefore they pray very devoutly to them, and beg their Intercession

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with God and their Saviour. Especially in earthly Courts the Queen Mother is supposed to have a powerful influence upon the young Prince her Son ; and therefore they do not doubt but the Virgin *Mary*, the Mother of Christ, can do what she pleases with her Son ; And since it is generally observed, that Women are more soft, and tender, and compassionate, than men, they hope to gain that by her Intercession, which He, who died for them, would not grant without it ; and therefore they beg her to shew her self to be a Mother, that is, to take the Authority of a Mother upon her, and command her Son. Thus Princes and Great Men love to have their Pictures set up in publick places, and to have all civil Respects paid to them, which redounds to the honour of those whose Pictures they are ; and therefore they imagine that this is as acceptable to Christ and the Saints, as it is to Men ; as if the other World were nothing else but a new Scene of Sense and Passion.

Mankind is very apt to such kind of Reasonings as these ; and indeed they can have no other, when they will undertake to guess at unseen and unknown things : But if there be any difference between the Court of Heaven and Earth, if pure Spirits, who are separated from Flesh and Sense, have other Passions and Resentments than Men have, that is, if we must not judge of spiritual things by Sense, of the Government of God by the Passions of men, then such Reasonings as these may betray us to absurd and foolish Superstitions, but are a very ill Foundation for any new and uncommanded Acts of Worship.

5. Never admit any Arguments meerly from the usefulness, conveniency, or supposed necessity of any thing, to prove that it is. As for instance : A Supream Oecume-

Oecumenical Bishop, and an Infallible Judge of Controversies, are thought absolutely necessary to the Unity of the Church, and Certainty of Faith, and confounding of Schisms and Heresies. If there be not a Supreme Pastor, there can be no Unity ; if there be not an Infallible Judge, there can be no certainty in Religion ; every man must be left to his own private Judgment, and then there will be as many different Religions, as there are Faces. Now if I thought all this were true, (as I believe not a word of it is) I should onely conclude, that it is great pity that there is not an Universal Pastor and Infallible Judge instituted by Christ ; but if you would have me conclude from these Premises, *Ergo*, there is an Universal Bishop and Head of the Church, and an Infallible Judge of Controversies, I must beg your pardon for that ; for such Arguments as these do not prove, that there is such a Judge, but only that there ought to be one, and therefore I must conclude no more from them. Indeed this is a very fallacious way of Reasoning, because what we may call useful, convenient, necessary, may not be so in it self ; and we have reason to believe it is not so, if God have not appointed what we think so useful, convenient, or necessary : which is a truer and more modest way of Reasoning, than to conclude that God has appointed such a Judge, when no such thing appears, onely because we think it so useful and necessary, that he ought to do it. These Directions are sufficient to Preserve all considering Protestants from being imposed on by the fallacious Reasonings of Papists.

S E C T. II.

Concerning Scripture-Proofs.

2. **L**et us now consider their Scripture-Proofs, though it is not choice, but necessity, which puts them upon this Tryal: When they have good Catholicks to deal with, a little Scripture will serve the turn, but Hereticks will be satisfied with nothing else; and therefore in disputing with them, they are forced to make some little shew and appearance of proving their Doctrines by Scripture; but they come very unwillingly to it, and make as much of a little, as may be. The truth is, there is Evidence enough, that they have no great confidence in the Scripture themselves, and therefore do not deal honestly and fairly with poor Hereticks, when they make their boasts of Scripture.

For did they believe that their Doctrines which they endeavour to prove from Scripture, were plainly and evidently contained in them, why should they deny the People the liberty of reading the Scriptures? If the Scriptures be for them, why should they be against the Scriptures? The common Pretence is, that those who are unlearned, put very wild fences upon Scripture, and expound it by their own fancies; which in many cases indeed is too true: but why should the Church of *Rome* be more afraid of this, than other Protestant Churches? If they think the Scripture is as much for them, as we think it is for us, why dare not they venture this as well as we? We are not afraid men should read the Scripture, though we see what wild Interpretations some put on them, because we are certain we can prove our Faith by Scripture, and are able to satisfie all honest men, who will

will impartially study the Scriptures, that we give the true sense of them ; and if they believed, they could do so too, why do they avoid this tryal, when ever they can ? For though they admit People to dispute from the Scripture in *England*, where they cannot help it, yet they will not allow them so much as to see the Scriptures in *Italy* or *Spain*, where they have power to hinder it : Nay they themselves do in effect confess, that the peculiar Doctrines and Practices of their Religion, wherein they differ from all other Christian Churches, cannot be proved by Scripture. And therefore to help them out, where the Scripture fails, they fly to unwritten Traditions, which they make of equal authority with the Scriptures themselves ; which they would never do, were they not convinced, that the Scriptures are not so plain on their side, as to satisfie any man, who has not already given himself up to the Church of *Rome* with an implicit Faith.

And therefore, before you enter into any debate about the sense of any particular Texts of Scripture, and their way of proving their particular Doctrines from Scripture, ask them two Questions, without a plain Answer to which, it is to no purpose to dispute with them out of Scripture.

Ask 1. Whether they will allow the Holy Scriptures to be a complete and perfect Rule of Faith ; that no Christian ought to receive any Doctrine for an Article of Faith, which cannot be proved from Scripture ? This to be sure they must not allow, unless they will reject the Council of *Trent*, which gives as venerable an Authority to Tradition, as to Scripture it self : Since then they have two Rules, Scripture and Tradition ; when they pretend to dispute from Scripture, it is reasonable to know of them, whether they will stand to Scripture, and reject

reject such a Doctrine if it cannot be plainly proved out of Scripture: For if they will not stand to this, they give up their Cause, and there is no need to dispute with them: For why should I dispute with any man from Scripture, who will not stand to the determination of Scripture? We Protestants indeed do own the Authority of Scripture; and what we see plainly proved out of Scripture, we must abide by: which is reason enough for us to examine the Scripture-proofs which are produced by our Adversaries. But it is sufficient to make them blush, if they had any modesty, to pretend to prove their Doctrines from Scripture, when they themselves do not believe them meerly upon the Authority of Scripture, and dare not put their Cause upon that issue; which gives a just suspicion, that they are conscious to themselves, that their Scripture-proofs are not good, and should make Protestants very careful, how they are imposed on by them. To dispute upon such Principles as are not owned on both sides, can establish nothing, thô it may blunder and confound an Adversary; it is onely a tryal of Wit, where the subtlest Disputant will have the Victory; and it is not worth the while for any man to dispute upon these terms.

This is not to reject the Authority of Scriptures, because the Papists reject it, which no Protestant can or will do, but it is an effectual way for men, who are not skilled in Disputations, to deliver themselves from the troublesome Importunities of Popish Priests, when learned men, who can detect their Fallacies, are out of the way. Let them but ask them, Whether all the peculiar Doctrines of the Church of *Rome* can be proved by plain Scripture-evidence? If they say, they can; then they must reject the necessity of unwritten Traditions, and acknowledge the Scripture to be a complete and perfect

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Rule of Faith. A point, which I believe, no understanding Priest will yield. If they say, they cannot ; ask them, With what confidence they pretend to prove that from Scripture, which they confess is not in it ? Why they go about to impose upon you, and to perswade you to believe that upon the Authority of Scripture, which they themselves confess, is not, at least not plainly, contained in Scripture.

2. Ask such Disputants, who alledge the Authority of Scripture to prove their Popish Doctrines, How they themselves know what the fence of Scripture is, and how you shall know it ? For it is a ridiculous undertaking to prove any thing by Scripture, unless there be a certain way of finding out the fence of Scripture. Now there can be but three ways of doing this, either by an infallible Interpreter, or by the unanimous Consent of Primitive Fathers, or by such Humane means as are used to find out the fence of other Books.

I. If they say, we must learn the fence of Scripture from an infallible Interpreter : Tell them, this is not to dispute, but to beg the Cause. They are to prove from Scripture, the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome* ; and to do this, they would have us take the Church of *Rome*'s Exposition of Scripture. And then we had as good take her word for all, without disputing. But yet,

II. They know, that we reject the pretences of an infallible Interpreter : We own no such infallible Judge of the fence of Scripture. And therefore, at least, if they will dispute with us, and prove their Doctrines by Scripture, they must fetch their Proofs from the Scriptures themselves, and not appeal to an infallible Interpreter, whom we disown : Which is like appealing to a Judge in Civil matters, whom one of the contending Parties thinks incompetent, and to whose Judgment they will not

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stand ; which is never likely to end any Controversie : and yet they cannot quit an infallible Interpreter, without granting, that we may understand the Scriptures without such an Interpreter ; which is to give up the Cause of Infallibility.

2. One principal Dispute between us and the Church of *Rome*, is about this infallible Interpreter ; and they know, that we will not own such an Interpreter, unless they can prove from Scripture, that there is such an one, and who he is. The inquiry then is, How we shall learn from Scripture, that there is such an infallible Interpreter ? that is, who shall Expound those Scriptures to us, which must prove that there is an infallible Interpreter ? if without an infallible Interpreter we cannot find out the true sense of Scripture, how shall we know the true sense of Scripture, before we know this infallible Interpreter ? For an Interpreter, how infallible soever he be, cannot interpret Scripture for us, before we know him ; and if we must know this infallible Interpreter by Scripture, we must at least understand these Scriptures, which direct us to this infallible Interpreter, without his assistance. So that of necessity some Scriptures must be understood without an infallible Interpreter, and therefore he is not necessary for the Interpretation of all Scripture : And then I desire to know, why other Scriptures may not be understood the same way, by which we must find out the meaning of those Texts which direct us to an infallible Interpreter ? There are a hundred places of Scripture, which our Adversaries must grant, are as plain and easie to be understood, as those : And we believe it as easie a matter to find all the other *Trent*-Articles in Scripture, as the Supremacy and Infallibility of the Bishop of *Rome*. If ever there needed an infallible Interpreter of Scripture, it is to prove such an infallible Inter-

Interpreter from Scripture ; but upon this occasion he cannot be had, and if we may make shift without him here, we may as well spare him in all other cases.

3. Suppose we were satisfied from Scripture, that there is such an infallible Interpreter, yet it were worth knowing, where his infallible Interpretation is to be found ; for if there be such an Interpreter who never Interprets, I know not how either they or we shall understand Scripture the better for him : Now, have either Popes or General Councils given us an authentick and infallible Exposition of Scripture ? I know of none such : all the Expositions of Scripture in the Church of *Rome*, are writ by private Doctors, who were far enough from being infallible ; and the busines of General Councils, was not to expound Scripture, but to define Articles of Faith : and therefore we find the sense of very few Texts of Scripture Synodically defined by any General Council ; I think, not above four or five by the Council of *Trent*. So that after all their talk of an infallible Interpreter, when they undertake to expound particular Texts, and to dispute with us about the sense of them, they have no more Infallibility in this, than we have ; for if they have an infallible Interpreter, they are never the better for him, for he has not given them an infallible Interpretation, and therefore they are forced to do as Protestants do, interpret Scripture according to their own skill and understanding, which, I suppose, they will not say, is infallible.

But you'll say, though the Church has not given us an infallible Interpretation of Scripture, yet she has given us an infallible Exposition of the Faith, and that is an infallible Rule for expounding Scripture. I answer, there is a vast difference between these two : for our dispute is not about the sense of their Church, but about the

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fence of the Scripture; we know what Doctrines their Church has defined, but we desire to see them proved from Scripture: And is it not a very modest and pleasant proposal, when the Dispute is, how their Faith agrees with Scripture, to make their Faith the Rule of expounding Scripture? Though, I confess, that is the only way I know of, to make their Faith and the Scriptures agree; but this brings the Scripture to their Faith, does not prove their Faith from Scripture.

II. As for expounding Scripture by the unanimous consent of Primitive Fathers: This is indeed the Rule which the Council of *Trent* gives, and which their Doctors swear to observe; how well they keep this Oath, they ought to consider. Now as to this, you may tell them, that you would readily pay a great deference to the unanimous Consent of Fathers, could you tell how to know it; and therefore in the first place you desire to know the agreement of how many Fathers makes an unanimous Consent: for you have been told, that there have been as great variety in Interpreting Scripture among the ancient Fathers, as among our modern Interpreters; that there are very few, if any controverted Texts of Scripture, which are interpreted by an unanimous Consent of all the Fathers. If this unanimous Consent then signify all the Fathers, we shall be troubled to find such a Consent in expounding Scripture; must it then be the unanimous Consent of the greatest number of Fathers? This will be a very hard thing, especially for unlearned men to tell Noses: we can know the Opinion onely of those Fathers who were the Writers in every Age, and whose Writings have been preserved down to us; and who can tell, whether the major number of those Fathers who did not write, or whose Writings are lost, were of the same mind with those whose Writings we have?

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and why must the major part be always the wisest and best men? and if they were not, the Consent of a few wise men, is to be preferred before great numbers of other Expositors.

Again, ask them, whether these Fathers were Infallible or Traditionary Expositors of Scripture, or whether they expounded Scripture according to their own private Reason and Judgment: if they were Infallible Expositors, and delivered the Traditionary sense and interpretation of Scripture, it is a little strange, how they should differ in their Expositions of Scripture, and as strange how private Doctors and Bishops should in that Age come to be Infallible, and how they should lose it in this; for now Infallibility is confined to the Bishop of *Rome*, and a General Council. If they were not Infallible Expositors, how comes their Interpretations of Scripture to be so sacred, that it must not be opposed? Nay, how comes an Infallible Church to prescribe such a Fallible Rule of interpreting Scriptures? If they expounded Scripture according to their own Reason and Judgment, as it is plain they did; then their Authority is no more sacred than their Reason is; and those are the best Expositors, whether Ancient or Modern, whose Expositions are backed with the best Reasons. We think it a great confirmation of our Faith, that the Fathers of the Church in the first and best Ages did believe the same Doctrines, and expound Scripture in great and concerning points, much to the same sense that we do; and therefore we refuse not to appeal to them, but yet we do not wholly build our Faith upon the Authority of the Fathers; we forsake them where they forsake the Scriptures, or put perverse fences on them; and so does the Church of *Rome* too, after all their boast of the Fathers, when they contradict the present *Roman-Catholick*.

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as they do very often, though I believe without any malicious design, because they knew nothing of it.

However, ask them once more, whether that sense which they give of those Texts of Scripture, which are controverted between us and the Church of *Rome*, be confirmed by the unanimous consent of all the ancient Fathers: whether, for instance, all the ancient Fathers did expound those Texts, *Thou art Peter, and on this Rock will I build my Church, and feed my Sheep*, &c. of the personal Supremacy and Infallibility of *Peter* and his Successors the Bishops of *Rome*? Whether they all expounded those words, *This is my Body*, of the Transubstantiation of the Elements of Bread and Wine into the natural Flesh and Blood of Christ? and those words, *Drink ye all of this*, to signify, Let none drink of the Cup but the Priest who consecrates? and so in other Scriptures. If they have the confidence to say, that all the Fathers expounded these and such-like Scriptures, as the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* now do, tell them, you have heard and seen other Expositions of such Scriptures cited from the ancient Fathers by our Divines, and that you will refer that cause to them, and have it tried whenever they please.

III. There is no other way then left of understanding Scripture, but to expound it as we do other Writings; by considering the signification and propriety of words, and phrases, the scope and context of the place, the reasons of things, the Analogie between the Old and New Testament, and the like: When they dispute with Protestants, they can reasonably pretend to no other way of expounding Scripture, because we admit of no other; and yet if they allow of this, they open a wide Gap for all Heresies to come into the Church; they give up the Authority of the Church, and make every man his own

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own Pope, and expose themselves to all the fenceless Rallery of their admired *Pax Nobis*. By this they confess, that the Scripture may be understood by Reason, that they can back their Interpretations with such powerful Arguments, as are able to convince Hereticks, who reject the Authority of an infallible Interpreter: and then they may unsay all their hard Sayings against the Scriptures. That they are *dark and obscure dead Letters, unsenched Characters, meer figured Ink and Paper*; they must recant all their Rallery against expounding Scripture by a private Spirit, and allowing every man to judge of the fence of it, and to chuse what he pleases: for thus they do themselves when they dispute with Hereticks about the fence of Scripture; and I am pretty confident, they would never speak against Scripture nor a private Spirit more, if this private Spirit would but make us Converts; but the mischief is, a private Spirit, if it have any tincture of Sence and Reason, seldom expounds Scripture to a Roman-Catholick fence.

So that in truth it is a vain, nay a dangerous thing for Papists to dispute with Protestants about the fence of Scripture; for it betrays the Cause of the Church, and vindicates the Scriptures and every mans natural Right of judging from the Usurpations and Encroachments of a pretended Infallibility; but yet dispute they do, and attempt to prove their Doctrines from Scripture. And because it is too large a task for this present Undertaking, to examine all their Scripture-Proofs, I shall only observe some general faults they are guilty of, which whoever is aware of, is in no danger of being imposed on by their Pretences to Scripture: and I shall not industriously multiply Particulars, for there are some few palpable mistakes, which run through most of their Scripture-Proofs.

1. As first, many of their Scripture-Proofs are founded upon the likeness of a word or phrase, without any regard to the sense and signification of that word in Scripture, or to the matter to which it is applied : As for instance, There is not a more useful Doctrine to the Church of *Rome*, than that of unwritten Traditions, which are of equal Authority with the Scriptures ; for were this owned, they might put what Novel Doctrines they pleased upon us, under the venerable name of ancient and unwritten Traditions. Well, we deny that there are any such unwritten Traditions, which are of equal Authority with the Scripture, since the Canon of Scripture was written and perfected, and desire them to prove that there are any such unwritten Traditions. Now they think it sufficient to do this, if they can but find the word Tradition in Scripture ; and that we confess they do in several places : for Tradition signifies only the delivery of the Doctrine of the Gospel, which we grant was not done perfectly in writing, when those Epistles were written, which speak of Traditions,

¹ Thess. 2. 15. by word, as well as by Epistle. But because the whole Doctrine of the Gospel was not written at first, but delivered by word of mouth, does it hence follow, that after the Gospel is written, there are still unwritten Traditions of equal Authority with the Scripture ? This is what they should prove ; and the mere naming of Traditions in Scripture, before the Canon was perfected, does not prove this : for all men know, that the Gospel was delivered by word of mouth, or by unwritten Tradition, before it was written ; but this does by no means prove, that there are unwritten Traditions, after the Gospel was written. To prove this, they should shew us where it is said, that there are some Traditions which shall never be written, that the Rule of Faith shall always

ways consist partly of written, partly of unwritten Traditions.

Thus we know how zealous the Church of *Rome* is for their Purgatory-fire, wherein all men, who are in a state of Grace, or delivered from the guilt of their sins, must yet undergo that punishment of them, which has not been satisfied for by other means. As profitable a Doctrine as any the Church of *Rome* has, because it gives great authority to Sacerdotal Absolution, and sets a good price upon Masses for the Dead, and Indulgences: and yet the best proof they have for this, is that Fire mentioned, *1 Cor. 3. 13, 14, 15.* *Every mans work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall declare every mans work of what sort it is.—If any mans work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, but so as by fire.* Now here is mention of Fire indeed; but how does it appear to be the Popish Purgatory? Suppose it were meant of a material Fire, tho' that does not seem so proper to try good or bad Actions, a true and Orthodox or Heretical Faith, yet this Fire is not kindled till the Day of Judgment, which is eminently in Scripture called *the day*, and is the only day we know of in Scripture, which shall be revealed by fire, when the *Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,* *2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.* So that here is nothing but the word Fire, applied to another Fire, than St. Paul ever thought on, to prove a Popish Purgatory.

Thus they make Confession to a Priest ordinarily necessary to obtain the Forgiveness of our sins; and have no better Scripture-Proofs for it, but that we are often commanded to confess our sins, sometimes to God, and sometimes to one another, but never to a Priest.

They have made a Sacrament of Extream Unction,

wherein the sick Person is anointed for the Forgiveness of Sins ; and though a Sacrament ought to have the most plain and express Institution, both as to the matter, and form, and use, and end of it, yet the only Proofs they produce for this, is the Disciples working Miraculous Cures by Anointing the Sick with Oyl, *6 Mark 13.* which methinks is a little different from the Sacrament of extream Unction, which is not to cure their sickness, but to forgive their sins ; and St. James his Command, *Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oyl in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.* Where anointing with Oyl, joyned with fervent Prayer, is prescribed as a means of restoring the sick person to health again ; and therefore is not the Popish Extream Unction, which is to be administred onely to those who are dying : And though St. James adds, *And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him ;* yet, 1. This is not said to be the effect of Anointing, but of the fervent Prayer : and 2. This very Forgiveness of Sins does not refer to a plenary Pardon of sins in the other World, but signifies the removal of the visible and sensible punishments of Sin, in restoring the sick Person to health again. That though such sickness was inflicted on him for his sins, and possibly were the effects of Church-censures, which in those days were confirmed and ratified by bodily punishments, yet upon his Reconciliation to the Church, and the Prayers of the Elders, and the Ceremony of Anointing, he should be restored to health again, which was an external and visible Remission of his sins, and should be a plenary Pardon, if he brought forth the true and genuine fruits of Repentance : This is very natural, and

6 James 14,
15.

and very agreeable to the scope and design of the Text, and differs as much from the Popish Extream Unction, as their greatest Adversaries could wish. Such kind of Proofs as these, are meerly the work of Fancy and Imagination, and can impose upon no man who will but attend to the different use and signification of words.

2. Another grand fault our Roman Adversaries are guilty of is, that their Scripture-proofs are always very lame and imperfect, that is, that they never prove their whole Doctrine from Scripture, but only some little part of it: They draw very fine and artificial Schemes, and if they can find some little appearance in Scripture to countenance any one part of it, they take that for a Proof of the whole. As for instance :

Thus they tell us, that Christ made *Peter* the Prince of the Apostles, and the Head of the Universal Church, his own Vicar upon Earth; and that the Bishops of *Rome*, who are *St. Peter's* Successors, succeed not only to his Chair, but to all the Rights and Prerogatives of *St. Peter*; and therefore the Bishop of *Rome* also is the Head of the Church, the Oecumenical Pastor, who neither wants *St. Peter's* Keys nor Sword. This is a very notable point, if it were well proved; but as I observed before, this being a matter of pure Institution, which depends wholly upon the Will of God, it can be proved only by Scripture: How much then of this do they pretend to prove from Scripture? Why, they will prove by Scripture, that *St. Peter* was the Prince of the Apostles, because Christ said unto him, *Thou art Peter, and on this Rock will I build my Church: and I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and feed my Sheep:* which indeed are lamentable Proofs, for the same Power was given to all the Apostles, *20 John 21, 22, 23. Then said Jesus unto them, Peace be unto you, as my Father sent*

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me, even so send I you, all of you ; and therefore not one in subjection to another, but all with equal Power : And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. Accordingly on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost fell on them all, they were all endowed with the Gift of Tongues, and Miracles, and Prophesie ; they all had the same Infallible Spirit, and therefore needed no superiour Head over them : They were to be separated into all parts of the World, where they could have no Communication with each other, and therefore could have no Univerſal Head. The History of the Acts of the Apostles gives not the least intimation of any such Superiority, which either St. Peter challenged, or the other Apostles paid him ; which are strong Presumptions against such a Supremacy of St. Peter : and I suppose they themselves will grant, that all the rest of the Apostles were as Infallible as he.

But suppose we should grant them, that St. Peter was the chief of the Apostles, and had a kind of Primacy not of Government, but Order, how do they prove from Scripture, that the Bishop of *Rome* succeeds in all the Rights and Prerogatives of St. Peter ? for unless this be proved, whatever Prerogative St. Peter had, it signifies nothing to them : and yet this cannot be proved, but by institution ; for though Christ had bestowed a Primacy on St. Peter, yet unless he expressly grant it to his Successors too, nay to his Successors in the See of *Rome*, his Primacy, as being a personal Prerogative, must die with his Person : As a Prince may grant a Priority to persons in the same Office and Power, may make a first Colonel, or a first Captain, but if these men to whom the precedence is given, die or are removed, those who succeed in their Office and Power,

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to the same Regiment or Company, do not therefore succeed to their Priority too; for this did not belong to their Office, but to their Persons; and the King may give the Priority again to whom he pleases, or appoint them to succeed in course, according to their admission into such Offices. And by the same reason, the Primacy of the *Roman Bishops*, who are St. *Peter's* Successors, does not follow from the Primacy of St. *Peter*, unless they can shew, that Christ has given them the Primacy also, as well as St. *Peter*; and this must be proved from Scripture, because it is matter of Institution, and no Arguments in the World can prove any thing, which depends solely upon an Institution, without proving the Institution: But this the *Roman Doctors* never pretend to, for they know, that there is not one word in Scripture about it; and nothing but the Authority of Scripture can prove a Divine Institution. So that could they prove the Primacy of St. *Peter* from Scripture, they prove but half their Point, and that the most inconsiderable half too, for it does them no good. And therefore when they make a great noise about St. *Peter's* Primacy and Prerogatives, never trouble your selves to dispute that Point with them, which is nothing to the purpose; but to require them to prove, from Scripture, that the Bishop of *Rome*, as St. *Peter's* Successor, is appointed by Christ to be the supremal Oecumenical Bishop, and the Prince of all Bishops. And if you stick here, as in reason you ought, there is an end of that Controversie.

Thus there is nothing the Church of *Rome* makes a greater noise about, than Infallibility, though they are not agreed where to place this Infallibility, whether in the Pope or a General Council: But let it be where it will, this being a matter of Institution, must be proved by Scripture: how then in the first place do they prove the

the Pope to be Infallible? That they think is very plain, because Christ says, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* But how does this prove, that the Bishop of *Rome* is Infallible? For here is not one word of the Bishop of *Rome*. Yes, this proves St. Peter to be infallible, who was afterwards Bishop of *Rome*, and therefore all his Successors are infallible too. Now that St. Peter was infallible, as all the other Apostles were, we readily grant; though, I think, this Text does not prove it: But does this prove the Bishop of *Rome*'s Infallibility? Just as St. Peter's Primacy proves the Pope to be the Oecumenical Primate: They themselves must grant, that an infallible Apostle may have a fallible Bishop for his Successor; or else they must either deny, that the rest of the Apostles, as well as St. Peter, were infallible, or they must grant, that all the Apostles Successors, that is, all the Bishops, who succeeded any of the Apostles in their Sees, must be as infallible as the Bishops of *Rome*, who succeeded St. Peter; and then there will be so much Infallibility, that it will be worth nothing: If then there be not a natural and necessary entail of Infallibility upon the Successors of infallible Apostles, they must shew us an express Institution, which makes the Successors of *Peter at Rome* infallible. And let our Protestant demand this, before he owns the Infallibility of the Pope of *Rome*, and then, I believe, they will not think him worth Converting.

Thus as for those who place Infallibility in a General Council, demand a Scripture-proof of it, that they would produce the General Council's Charter for Infallibility: This they can't do; but they say the Church is infallible, and the General Council is the Church Representative, and therefore a General Council must be infallible too.

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So that here are several things for them to prove, and to prove by Scripture too; for there is no other way of proving them, before they can prove the Infallibility of General Councils: As, 1. That the Church is Infallible. 2. That a General Council is the Church Representative. 3. That the Church Representative, is that Church to which the Promise of Infallibility is made. And then they might conclude, that a General Council, as being the Church Representative, is Infallible. Now instead of proving every particular of this by Scripture, (as they must do, if they will prove by Scripture, that General Councils are Infallible) they pretend to prove no more than the first of the three, that the Church is Infallible; and that very lamely too, as may appear more hereafter: and then they take all the rest for granted, without any proof: which is just as if a man, who in order to prove his Title to an Estate, is required to prove, that this Estate did anciently belong to his Family, that it was entailed upon the Heir Male, that this entail was never cut off, nor the Estate legally alienated, and that he alone is the true surviving Heir; should think it enough to prove only the first of these, that the Estate did anciently belong to his Family; which it might have done, and yet not belong to it now, or if it did still belong to it, he may not be the true Heir.

Thus if we consider what it is they teach about Purgatory, we shall quickly perceive, how little it is, they pretend to prove of it; they tell us, that there is a Purgatory-fire after this life, where men undergo the punishment of their sins, when the fault is pardoned: that the Church has Power, out of her stock of Merits, which consists of the supererogating Works of great and eminent Saints, to grant Pardons & Indulgences to men while they live, to deliver them from several thousand years punishment,

ment, which is due to their sins in Purgatory : that the Souls in Purgatory may be released out of it by the Prayers, and Alms, and Masses of the living ; which is the very life and soul of this Doctrine of Purgatory : Now of all this, they pretend to prove no more from Scripture, but that there is a Purgatory-fire after this Life ; and how they prove it, you have already heard : But that either Penances or Pilgrimages, and other extraordinary Acts of Devotion, while we live, or the Pope's Pardons and Indulgences, can either remit or shorten the pains of Purgatory ; or that the Prayers and Alms of our living Friends, or Masses said for us by mercenary Priests, can deliver us out of Purgatory, which we are principally concerned to know, and without which, Purgatory will not enrich the Priests, nor the Church ; this they never attempt, that I know of, to prove by Scripture : Whether there be a Purgatory or not, in it self considered, is a meer speculative point, and of no value : But could they prove, that the Pope has the Keys of Purgatory, and that Alms and Masses will deliver out of Purgatory ; this were worth knowing, and is as well worth proving as any Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, for there is nothing they get more by. But if you will not believe this, till they produce a Scripture-Proof of it, you may let them dispute on about the place of Purgatory, and keep your Money in your Pocket. Thus it is in most other cases, if you take their whole Doctrine together, and demand a Proof of every part of it, and not take a Proof of some little branch of it, for a Proof of the whole, you will quickly find, that they will not be so fond of disputing, as some of them now are.

Another way our *Roman* Adversaries have of proving their Doctrines from Scripture is, instead of plain and positive Proofs, to produce some very remote and in-evident

evident consequences from Scripture, and if they can but hale a Text of Scripture into the premises, whatever the conclusion be, they call it a Scripture-Proof. There are infinite Instances of this, but I can only name some few.

Thus they prove the perpetual Infallibility of the Church, because Christ promises his Disciples to be with them *to the end of the world*, 28 *Matth. 20.* which promise cannot be confined to their persons, for they were to die long before the end of the World, and therefore must extend to their Successors. Suppose that, and does Christ's being with them, necessarily signifie, that he will make them Infallible? Is not Christ with every particular Church, with every particular Bishop, nay with every particular good Christian, and must they all be Infallible then?

Thus Christ promises that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church; *Ergo*, the Church is Infallible; for if Error and Heresie prevails against the Church, the Gates of Hell prevail against it: And I add, if Sin and Wickedness prevail against the Church, the Gates of Hell prevail against it; *Ergo*, the Church is Impeccable, and cannot sin; which is to the full as good a consequence as the other: And therefore the Gates of Hell prevailing, can neither signifie the meer prevalency of Errors or Sin in the Church, but such a prevalency as destroys the Church; and this shall never be, because Christ has promised it shall never be; and it may never be, though the Church be not Infallible; and therefore this does not prove Infallibility.

Thus they prove there is such a place as Purgatory, where Sins are forgiven and expiated, because our Saviour says, That the sin against the Holy Ghost, shall neither be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come,

Matt. 12. 32. and therefore there are some Sins which are forgiven in the next World, because there is a Sin which shall not be forgiven there. Now not to consider the ordinary use of such Phrases to signify no more, than it shall never be, without distinguishing between what is to be done in this World, and what in the next ; nay, not to consider how contrary this is to their own Doctrine of Purgatory, that men who go to Purgatory have all their Sins already forgiven, though they must suffer the punishment of them there ; which how absurd soever it is, yet shews, that Purgatory is not a place of forgiving Sins ; and therefore cannot be meant by our Saviour in those words : yet supposing all they would have, that there shall be some Sins forgiven in the next World, which are not forgiven in this ; How does this prove a Popish Purgatory, where Souls endure such torments as are not inferiour to those of Hell it self, excepting their duration ? That some Sins shall be forgiven in the next World, I think, does not very evidently prove, that men shall be tormented, it may be for several Ages, in the Fire of Purgatory.

Thus they prove the necessity of Auricular Confession to a Priest, from the power of Judicial Absolution. Christ has given the Priest power to forgive Sins, and hereby has made him a Judge, to retain or remit Sins, to absolve and inflict Penances. Now a Judge cannot judge right, without a particular knowledge of the Fact, and all the circumstances of it ; and this the Priest cannot know without the confession of the Penitent : and therefore as Priests have authority to absolve, so a Penitent, who would be absolved, must of necessity confess. But now I should think it a much better consequence, that the Priest has not such a judicial authority of Absolution, as requires a particular confession of the Penitent, because Christ

Christ has no where commanded all men to confess their Sins to a Priest, than that the Priest has such a judicial Authority, and therefore all men must confess to a Priest: for though our Saviour does give power to his Apostles to remit and retain Sins, yet those words do not necessarily signify a judicial Authority to forgive Sins, or if it did, it may relate onely to publick Sins, which are too well known without a private confession; or however, it is not the particular knowledge of the Sin, with all the circumstances of it, but the marks and characters of true Repentance for publick or secret Sins, which is the best rule and direction whom to absolve; and therefore there is no need of a particular Confession to this purpose.

But the Sophistry of this is most palpable, when they draw such consequences from one Text of Scripture, as directly contradict other plain and express Texts. Thus because St. Peter tells us, That there are many things hard to be understood, in St. Paul's Epistles, *which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. From hence they would conclude, that People ought not to be allowed to read the Bible: as if St. Peter had intended to forbid them to read those Epistles, which St. Paul had written to them; nay, to read this very Epistle which he himself now sent to them. For these Epistles which were sent to the Churches, that they might be read by them, make a considerable part of the New Testament, which the People must not be allowed to read now. But setting aside this, this consequence, that the People must not read the Bible, is directly contrary to a great many other Texts, which expressly command them to read, and search, and study, and meditate on the Laws of God, and the Holy Scriptures, as every body knows. I confess it amazes me to hear men argue at this rate: when they can-

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not produce any one Text which forbids People to read the Scriptures, and there are a great many express commands, that they should read the Scriptures, they think it sufficient to oppose against all this Authority, a consequence of their own making, and a very absurd one too, and call this a Scripture-proof.

I would not be thought wholly to reject a plain and evident consequence from Scripture; but yet I will never admit of a meer consequence to prove an Institution, which must be delivered in plain terms, as all Laws ought to be; and where I have no other proof, but some Scripture-consequences, I shall not think it equivalent to a Scripture-proof: if the consequences be plain and obvious, and such as every man sees, I shall not question it; but remote, and dubious, and disputed consequences, if we have no better evidence, to be sure are a very ill foundation for Articles of Faith. Let our Protestant then tell such Disputants, that for the Institution of Sacraments, and for Articles of Faith, he expects plain positive Proofs: that as much as the Protestant Faith is charged with uncertainty, we desire a little more certainty for our Faith, than meer inferences from Scripture, and those none of the plainest neither.

4. Another false pretence to Scripture-proofs is, to clap their own sense upon the words of Scripture, without any regard to the use and propriety of words, to the circumstances of the place, to the reason and nature of things; and to call this a Scripture-proof of their Doctrine, when their Doctrines do not naturally grow there, but are onely engrafted by some cunning Artists, upon a Scripture-stock. I shall give you onely one instance of this, their Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

As for Transubstantiation, they teach, that the Elements of Bread and Wine are converted into the natural Flesh

Flesh and Bloud of Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary: That after Consecration there is nothing of the substance of Bread and Wine, but the Accidents subsist without a substance: That the natural Body of Christ his Soul and Divinity, are present under the species of Bread; nay, that whole Christ, Flesh and Bloud, is under the species of Bread, and in every particle of it, and under the species of Wine, and every drop of it: That the Body of Christ is not broken, nor his Bloud shed in the Sacrament, but only the species of Bread and Wine, which are nothing: That it is only this Nothing which we eat and drink in the Sacrament, and which goes down into our stomachs, and carries whole Christ down with it. Now this Doctrine sounds so very harsh, is so contrary to all the Evidence of our Senses, and has so many Absurdities and Contradictions to Reason, that it ought to be very plainly proved from Scripture in every part of it: for if a man might be perswaded to renounce his Senses and Reason to believe Scripture, yet it ought to be equally evident to him at least, that Scripture is for it, as it is, that Sense and Reason is against it: and yet there is not one word in Scripture to prove any one part of this Doctrine of Transubstantiation; neither that the natural Flesh and Bloud of Christ is in the Sacrament, nor that the substance of Bread and Wine does not remain after Consecration, nor that the Accidents of Bread and Wine, such as colour, smell, taste, quantity, weight, subsist without any substance, or subject to subsist in. These are such Paradoxes to Sense and Reason, that they ought to be very well supported with Scripture, before they are received for Articles of Faith, or else our Faith will be as very an Accident, without any substance, as the sacramental species themselves are. But though they have no Text which proves the least

Tittle.

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Title of all this, yet they have a Text whereon they graft this Doctrine of Transubstantiation, *viz. This is my Body*, which they say, signifies every thing which they teach concerning Transubstantiation ; but then I hope they will prove that it does so, not expect that we should take it for granted, because they say it. Now, not to insist upon those Arguments, whereby our Divines have so demonstratively proved, that Transubstantiation, as explained by the Church of *Rome*, cannot be the sense of *This is my Body*, my advice to Protestants is to put them upon the proof, that this is the sense of it, which in reason they ought to prove, because there is not one word of it in the Text ; and I shall only tell them what Proofs they ought to demand for it.

Now I suppose all men will think it reasonable, that the Evidence for it, should at least be equal to the Evidence against it, though we ought indeed to have more reason to believe it, than to disbelieve it ; or else we must hang in suspence, when the Balance is equal and turns neither way. Now I will not oppose the Evidence of Sense and Reason, against the Authority of Scripture : for I will never suppose that they can contradict each other : and if there should appear some contradiction between them, I will be contented at present, without disputing that point, to give it on the side of Scripture ; but I will oppose the Evidence of Sense and Reason against any private man's, or any Churches Exposition of Scripture : and if that Exposition they give of any Text of Scripture, as suppose, *This is my Body*, contradict the Evidence of Sense and Reason, I may modestly require as plain proof, that this is the meaning of the Text, as I have, that such a meaning is contrary to all Sense and Reason : for though Sense and Reason be not the Rule and Measure of Faith, yet we must use

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use our Sense and Reason in expounding Scripture, or we may quickly make a very absurd and senseless Religion.

Now this shews us what kind of Proof we must require, that Transubstantiation is the Doctrine of the Gospel, viz. as certain Proof as we have, that Transubstantiation is contrary to Sense and Reason. And therefore,

1. We must demand a self-evident Proof of this, because it is self-evident, that Transubstantiation contradicts Sense and Reason. Every man, who knows what the word means, (which I believe men may do, without being great Philosophers) and will consult his own Senses and Reason, will need no Arguments to prove, that Transubstantiation contradicts both. Now such a Scripture-Proof, I would see for Transubstantiation, so plain, and express, and self-evident, that no man, who understands the words, can doubt whether this be the meaning of them; I, mean, a reasonable, not an obstinate, wilful, and sceptical doubting. Now I believe, that our Adversaries themselves will not say, that *This is my Body*, is such a self-evident Proof of Transubstantiation; I am sure some of the wisest men among them have not thought it so, and the fierce Disputes for so many Ages about the interpretation of those words, proves that it is not so: for men do not use to dispute what is self-evident, and proves it self without any other Arguments. Now it is very unreasonable to require any man to believe Transubstantiation against a self-evident Proof, that it is contrary to Sense and Reason, without giving him a self-evident Proof, that it is the Doctrine of Scripture; which is to require a man to believe against the best Reason and Evidence.

2. We must demand such a Scripture-Proof of Transubstan-

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substantiation, as cannot possibly signify any thing else; or else it will not answer that Evidence which we have against Transubstantiation; for Sense and Reason pronounce Transubstantiation to be naturally impossible; and therefore unless it be as impossible to put any other sense upon Scripture than what signifies Transubstantiation, as it is to reconcile Transubstantiation to Sense and Reason, there is not such good Evidence for Transubstantiation, as against it. Were the Scripture-Proofs for Transubstantiation so plain and evident, that it were impossible to put any other sense on the words, then I would grant, that it is as impossible for those who believe the Scriptures to disbelieve Transubstantiation, as it is for those, who trust to their own Sense and Reason, to believe it. Here the difficulty would be equal on both sides, and then I should prefer a Divine Revelation (if it were possible to prove such a Revelation to be Divine) before natural Sense and Reason; but I presume, no man will say, that it is impossible to put another, and that a very reasonable, interpretation upon those words, *This is my Body*, without expounding them to the sense of Transubstantiation.

Our Roman Adversaries do not deny, but that these words are capable of a figurative, as well as of a literal sense; as when the Church is called the Body of Christ, Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone, it is not meant of his natural, but his mystical Body: and thus when the Bread is called the Body of Christ, it may not signify his natural, but sacramental Body, or his Body to all the ends and purposes of a Sacrament. Now if there be any other good sense to be made of these words, besides Transubstantiation, there cannot be such a necessity to expound them of Transubstantiation, as there is not to expound them of it; for I do not reject Scripture, if

I deny Transubstantiation, when the words of Scripture do not necessarily prove it; but I renounce Sense and Reason, if I believe it. Now though I were bound to renounce my Sense and Reason, when they contradict Scripture, yet sure I am not bound to deny my Sense and Reason, when they do not contradict Scripture; and Sense and Reason are never contrary to Scripture, nor Scripture to them, when the words of Scripture are capable of such an interpretation as is reconcileable both to Sense and Reason: In such a case to expound Scripture contrary to Sense and Reason, is both to pervert the Scripture, and to contradict Reason, without any necessity. An unlearned man need not enter into a large Dispute about Transubstantiation; let him but require his Adversary to give him as plain Evidence, that Transubstantiation is the Doctrine of the Gospel, as he can give him, that it is contrary to Sense and Reason, and the Dispute will quickly be at an end. It had been very easie to have given more instances under every head, and to have observed more false ways of expounding Scripture, which the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* are guilty of; but these are the most obvious, and therefore the best fitted to my design to instruct unlearned men; and I must not suffer this Discourse, which was at first intended much shorter than it already is, to swell too much under my hands.

S E C T. III.

Concerning the Ancient Fathers and Writers of the Christian Church.

Though Learned men may squabble about the Sense of Fathers and Councils, it is very unreasonable, that unlearned men should be concerned in such

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Disputes, because they are not competent Judges of it, and yet there is nothing which our Roman Disputants make a greater noise with, among Women and Children, and the meanest sort of People, than Quotations out of Fathers and Councils, whom they pretend to be all on their side. Now as it is a ridiculous thing for them to talk of Fathers and Councils ~~such~~ people, so it is very ridiculous for such People to be converted by Sayings out of the Fathers and Councils: I confess, it has made me often smile, with a mixture of pity and indignation, at the folly of it; for what more contemptible easiness can any man be guilty of, than to change his Religion which he has been taught out of the Scriptures, and may find there if he pleases, because he is told by some honest Priest, (a sort of men who never deceive any one) that such or such a Father, who lived it may be they know not where nor when, and wrote they know not what, has spoke in favour of Transubstantiation, or Purgatory, or some other Popish Doctrine.

And therefore let me advise our Protestant, who is not skilled in these matters, when he is urged with the Authority of Fathers, to ask them some few Questions.

1. Ask them, How you shall certainly know what the Judgment of the Fathers was? and this includes a great many Questions, which must be resolved, before you can be sure of this, as, How you shall know that such Books were written by that Father, whose name it bears? or that it has not been corrupted by the ignorance or knavery of Transcribers, while they were in the hands of Monks, who usurped great Authority over the Fathers, and did not only pare their Nails, but altered their very Habit and Dress, to fit them to the modes of the

the times, and make them fashionable? How you shall know what the true meaning of those words are, which they cite from them; which the words themselves many times will not discover, without the Context: How you shall know that such Sayings are honestly quoted, or honestly translated? How you shall know whether this Father did not in other places contradict what he here says: or did not alter his opinion after he had wrote it, without writing publick Recantations, as St. Austin did? Whether this Father was not contradicted by other Fathers? And in that case, Which of the Fathers you must believe?

You may add, That you do not ask these Questions at random, but for great and necessary Reasons: for in reading some late English Books both of Protestants and Papists, you find large Quotations out of the Fathers on both sides; that some are charged with false Translations, with perverting the Fathers sense, with mis-citing his words, with quoting spurious Authors, as it seems many of those are which make up the late *Speculum*, or Ecclesiastical Prospective-glass; to name no more. Now how shall you, who are an unlearned man, judge of such Disputes as these? What Books are spurious or genuine? whether the Fathers be rightly quoted, and what the true sense of them is? For my part, I know not what Answer such a Disputant could make, but to blush, and promise not to alledge the Authority of Fathers any more. It is certain, in such matters, those who are unlearned, must trust the learned; and then, I suppose, an unlearned Protestant will rather trust a Protestant than a Popish Doctor, as Papists will rather trust their Priests than Protestant Divines; and then there is not much to be got on either side; this while For when a Protestant shews an inclination rather to believe a Popish than a

Protestant Divine, he is certainly three quarters a Papist before hand.

Indeed unlearned Protestants, who are inquisitive and have time to read, have such advantages now to satisfie themselves even about the sense of Fathers and Councils, as it may be no Age before ever afforded: There being so many excellent Books written in English, as plainly confirm the Protestant Faith, and confute Popery, by the Testimonies and Authorities of ancient Writers; and such men, though they do not understand Latin and Greek, are in no danger of all the Learning of their Popish Adversaries: and any man who pleases, may have recourse to such Books, and see the state of the Controversie with his own Eyes, and judge for himself; but those who cannot do this, may very fairly decline such a trial, as improper for them. For,

2. Let our Protestant ask such Disputers, whether a plain man may not attain a sufficient knowledge and certainty of his Religion, without understanding Fathers and Councils? If they say he cannot, ask them, how many Roman-Catholicks there are that understand Fathers and Councils? Ask them, how those Christians understood their Religion, who lived before there were any of these Fathers and Councils? Ask them again, whether they believed that God did make it impossible to the greatest part of Mankind, to understand the Christian Religion? For even among Christians themselves, there is not one in an hundred thousand, who understands Fathers and Councils, and it is morally impossible they should: and therefore certainly there must be a shorter and easier way to understand Christian Religion than this; or else the generality of Mankind, even of protest Christians, are out of all possibility of Salvation. Ask them once more, whether it be not a much easier matter for a plain man to learn

learn all things necessary to Salvation, out of the Scriptures themselves, especially with the help of a wise and learned Guide, than to understand all Fathers and Councils, and take his Religion from them? Why then do they so quarrel at Peoples reading the Scriptures, and put them upon reading Fathers and Councils? I suppose they will ~~great~~ the Scriptures may be read a little sooner than so many Voluminous Fathers, and Labbe's Councils into the bargain; and, I believe, most men, who try, will think, that they are more easily understood; and therefore if Protestants, as they pretend, can have no certainty of the true sense of Scripture, I am sure there is much less certainty to be had from the Fathers: A short time will give us a full view of the Scriptures; to read and understand all the Fathers, is work enough for a man's life: the Scripture is all of a piece, every part of it agrees with the rest; the Fathers many times contradict themselves and each other; and if men differ about the sense of Scripture, they differ much more about Fathers and Councils. That it is a mighty Riddle, that those who think ordinary Christians not fit to read the Scriptures, should think it necessary for them to understand Fathers and Councils; and yet they are ridiculous indeed to dispute with every Tradesman about Fathers and Councils, if they do not think they ought to read and understand them.

The sum is, such Protestants as are not skilled in Book-learning, may very reasonably tell these Men, who urge them with the Authority of Councils and Fathers, That they do not pretend to any skill in such matters, and hope it is not required of them, for if it be they are in an ill case: the Holy Scriptures, not Fathers and Councils, is the Rule of their Faith; if they had read the Fathers, they should believe them no farther, than what they taught

taught was agreeable to Scripture ; and therefore whatever Opinions any of the Fathers had, it is no concern of theirs to know, if they can learn what the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles was, without it : learned men may dispute about these things ; and they have heard, learned Protestants affirm, that the Church of *Rome* can find none of her peculiar Doctrines in the Writings of any of the Fathers for the first three hundred years ; and it's certain, if this be true, all the later Fathers are of no Authority to establish any new Doctrine ; for there was no more Authority in the Church, to bring in any new Doctrines, after three hundred years, than there is at this day.

Unlearned men may very honourably reject all dispute about Fathers and Councils, (though learned men cannot, and indeed need not ;) for if they are not bound to read Fathers and Councils, I think, they are not bound to understand them, nor to dispute about them ; and it is very unadvisably done, when they do : for it is past a jest in so serious a matter, though otherwise it were comical enough for men to be converted by Fathers and Councils, without understanding them.

C H A P.

CHAP. III.

How to Answer some of the most popular Pretexts urged by Papists against Protestants.

SECT. I.

1. *Concerning the Uncertainty of the Protestant Faith.*

OUR Popish Adversaries of late, have not so much disputed, as fenced ; have neither down-right opposed the Protestant Faith, nor vindicated their own, but have betaken themselves to some tricks and amusements, to divert and perplex the Dispute, and to impose upon the ignorant and unwary. One of their principal Arts has been to cry out of the Uncertainty of the Protestant Faith. This every body is nearly concerned in ; for there is nothing wherein certainty is so necessary, and so much desired, as in matters of Religion, whereon our eternal State depends. This has been often answered by Protestants, and I do not intend to enter into the merits of the Cause, and shew upon what a firm and sure bottom the Protestant Faith stands : this is a Cavil easily enough exposed to the scorn and contempt of all considering men, without so much trouble :

For 1. Suppose the Protestant Faith were uncertain, How is the Cause of the Church of *Rome* ever the better ? Is this a sufficient reason to turn Papists, because Protestants are uncertain ? Does this prove the Church of *Rome* to be Infallible, because the Church of *England* is Fallible ? Must Certainty necessarily be found among them, because

cause it is not to be found with us? Is *Thomas* an honest man, because *John* is a Knave? These are two distinct Questions, and must be distinctly proved. If they can prove our Faith uncertain, and their own certain, there is reason then to go over to them; but if they cannot do this, they may, it may be, perswade men to renounce the Protestant Faith, but not to embrace Popery. Ask them then, What greater assurance they have of their Faith, than we have of ours? If they tell you, their Church is Infallible; tell them, that is another Question, and does not belong to this Dispute. For the Infallibility of their Church, does not follow from the Uncertainty of our Faith; if they can prove their Church Infallible, whether they prove our Faith uncertain or not, we will at any time change Protestant Certainty for Infallibility: And if they could prove our Faith uncertain, unless they could prove their own more certain, (though we bate them Infallibility) we may cease to be Protestants, but shall never turn Papists.

2. Ask them, What they mean by the uncertainty of the Protestant Faith? For this may signifie two things: either, 1. That the Objects of our Faith are in themselves uncertain, and cannot be proved by certain Reasons: Or 2dly, That our Perswasion about these matters, is uncertain and wavering. If they mean the first, then the sense is, that the Christian Religion is an uncertain thing, and cannot be certainly proved; for this is the whole Protestant Faith: We believe the Apostles Creed, and whatever is contained in the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and this is all we believe: And I hope, they will not say these things are uncertain; for then they renounce the Christian Religion, and Infallibility it self cannot help them out: for Infallibility cannot make that certain, which is in it self uncertain:

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an infallible man must know things as they are, or else he is mistaken, and ceases to be infallible; and therefore what is certain, he infallibly knows to be certain, and what is uncertain, he infallibly knows to be uncertain: for the most certain and infallible knowledge does not change its Object, but sees it just as it is: And therefore they must allow the Objects of our Faith, or the Protestant Faith, as to the matter of it, to be very certain, and built upon certain reason, or else their infallible Church can have no certainty of the Christian Faith.

If they mean the second thing, that we have no certain persuasion about what we profess to believe: This is a great abuse to Protestants, as if we were all Knaves and Hypocrites, who do not heartily and firmly believe what we profess to believe: and a Protestant, who knows that he does very firmly and stedfastly believe his Religion, ought to reject such a Villanous Accusation as this, with indignation and scorn. Indeed it is both impudent and silly for any man to tell a Protestant, that his Faith is uncertain, (as that signifies an uncertain and doubtful Perswasion) when he knows and feels the contrary; and no body else can know this but himself: In what Notion then is the Protestant Faith uncertain? what can Faith signifie, but either the Objects of Faith, or the internal Assent and Perswasion? The Objects of our Faith are certain, if Christian Religion be so, that is, they have very certain Evidence: our Assent and Perswasion is very certain, as that is opposed to all doubtfulness and wavering: And what certainty then is wanting to the Protestant Faith?

When then you hear any of these men declaiming about the uncertainty of the Protestant Faith, onely ask them, What they mean by the Protestant Faith? whether the Articles of your Faith, that they are uncertain,

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or the Act of Faith, your internal Assent and Perswasion? If they say, they mean the Act of Faith: Tell them, that it is a strange presumption in them to pretend to know your Heart; that you know that best your self; whether you do firmly and stedfastly believe your Religion; and to give them satisfaction in that point, you assure them, that you do: As for the Objects of your Faith, or what it is you Believe, tell them, you are a Member of the Church of *Eng/and*, and embrace the Doctrine of it, and there they may find your Faith both as a Christian, and as a Protestant; and may try their skill on it, when they please, to prove any part of it uncertain, and you are ready to defend it. This is a plain and fair Answer, and I believe you will hear no more of them.

For as for their common Argument to prove the Uncertainty of the Protestant Faith. That there is a great variety of Opinions among Protestants, and that they condemn one another with equal confidence and assurance. Ask them, How this proves your Faith to be Uncertain, either as to its Object, or as to its Assent? May not what you believe, be very certainly true, because some men believe the contrary? Tell them, you do not place the certainty of what you believe, upon any man's believing, or not believing it, but upon the certain Reasons you have to prove it; and therefore if they would convince you, that what you believe is not certain, they must disprove your Reasons, not merely tell you, that other men think it false or uncertain, and believe otherwise: Thus does it prove, that you give an uncertain and doubtful Assent to what you profess to believe, because other men are very fully persuaded of the contrary? Pray tell them, that you do not build your Assent upon other mens Perswasions, but upon the Reasons of your Faith, and while they are unshaken, you

you shall believe as you do, and with the same assurance, whoever believes otherwise.

There are two things indeed, which this Argument proves, but they signify nothing to weaken the Protestant Faith.

1. That all the Doctrines which are professed by some Protestants, are not certain; for some of them must be false, when they are contradictory Doctrines maintained and professed by several Sects of Protestants; but then no man, that I know of, ever said, that all Protestant Doctrines were certain, which I hope does not hinder but that some Protestant Doctrines may be certain; and then the Doctrines of the Church of *England* may be certain, though some other Communions of Protestants have erred.

2. This Argument proves also, that men who are mistaken, may be very confidently persuaded of their mistakes, and therefore the confidence of persuasion does not prove the certainty of their Faith; and I never heard any man say that it did: But I hope this does not prove that a man, who is certain upon evident Reasons, must be mistaken too, because men, who are certain without Reason, may mistake.

And yet this very Argument, from the different and contrary Opinions among Protestants to prove the uncertainty of the Protestant Faith, signifies nothing, as to our Disputes with the Church of *Rome*: For ask them, what they would think of the Protestant Faith, were all Protestants of a mind? Would their Consent and Agreement prove the Certainty of the Protestant Faith? Then the Protestant Faith, in opposition to Popery, is very certain: for they all agree in condemning the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and thus I think they get nothing by this Argument: for if the

Dissentions of Protestants proves the uncertainty of their Faith, as to such matters, wherein they differ, then by the same Rule their Agreement in opposition to Popery, shews their great certainty in such matters: And this I suppose is no great Inducement to a Protestant to turn Papist.

S E C T. II.

Concerning Protestant Mis-representations of Popery.

THIS has been another late Artifice of our *Roman* Adversaries to amuse ignorant People with a great noise of Mis-representing: That Protestant Divines have painted Popery in such horrid shapes, as to disturb the Imaginations of People, and to beget an incurable Aversion in them against Popery, without understanding what it is. I shall not now dispute this matter over again: There has been so much of late said of it, and this Pretence so shamefully baffled, in answer both to the Representer, and to Monsieur *De Meaux*'s Exposition, that I am apt to think, they themselves could be very glad that it had never been mentioned, or could now be forgot; and therefore referring the inquisitive Readers to those late Books, wherein they will find this Controversie fairly stated, I have some few things to add, which are plain and obvious to every body; and that both with reference to the Probability of this Charge, and to the Consequences of it.

First, As to the Probability of this Charge. Now, 1. Ask them, Whether the first Reformers charged the Church of *Rome* with such Doctrines and Practices as they were not guilty of? We have not, that I know of,

of, increased our Charge against the Church of *Rome* in this Age; if there has been any difference, we have rather been more favourable and candid in our Censures of some of their Doctrines, than the first Reformers were. Now is it likely, that the first Reformers should charge the Church of *Rome* wronfully? No man can be a Mis-representer, but either out of ignorance or design; which of these then can we, with any Probability, charge the first Reformers with?

As for Ignorance, is it a probable thing, that *Luther*, *Melancthon*, *Oecolampadius*, *Zwinglius*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, or to come to our own English Reformers, that *Archbishop Cranmer*, and others, who had all been Papists themselves, should be ignorant what was taught and practised in the Church of *Rome*? It is now thought in this very Cause, a very considerable Proof, that Protestants do Mis-represent Papists, because some Papists deny such Doctrines and Practices as Protestants charge them with; and, say they, can you think that Papists do not understand their own Religion better than Protestants do? Now though this may be made a Question, and I am very apt to think, that compare the Learned and the Unlearned Protestants and Papists together, there are more Protestants than Papists, who understand Popery: and not only Experience verifies this, but there is a plain reason why it should be so; because it is the Principle of Protestants, that they must neither believe nor disbelieve any thing, without understanding it; but an implicate Faith in the Church, governs the unlearned Papists, and many of those who should be learned too.

But let that be as it will, this Argument signifies nothing to our first Reformers: for if Papists may be presumed

sumed to understand their own Religion, the first Reformers, who were all educated in Popery, might be as well presumed to understand what Popery then was; and therefore there can be no reason to suspect that they Mis-represented Popery out of Ignorance.

Nor is it more probable, that they should Mis-represent Popery out of Interest and Design: for if they were conscious to themselves, that Popery was not so bad as they represent it to be, why should they themselves have set up for Reformers? and what hope could they have, that at that time, when Popery was so well known, they should persuade the World to believe their Mis-representations?

Was it so desirable a thing for men to bring all the Powers of the Church and Court of *Rome* upon themselves, merely to gratifie a Mis-representing humour? Do these men remember what our Reformers suffered, for opposing Popery? the loss of their Estates, their Liberties, their Lives, all the Vengeance of a blind and enraged Zeal? And did they undergo all this with such constancy and Christian patience, only for the sake of telling Lyes, and raising scandalous Reports of the Church of *Rome*? We think it a very good Argument, that the Apostles and first Preachers of Christianity were very honest men, and had no design to cheat the World, because they served no worldly Interest by it; but cheerfully exposed themselves to all manner of Sufferings in Preaching the Gospel: and why does not the same Argument prove our first Reformers to be honest men, and then they could not be wilful Mis-representers?

Nay, if we will but allow them to have been cunning men (and it is evident they did not want wit) they would never have undertaken so hopeless a design, as to rundown

Popery

Popery meerly by Mis-representing it ; when, had their Exceptions against Popery been onely Mis-representations of their own, all the World could have confuted them : had the first Reformers been onely Mis-representers, can we think, that they could have imposed upon such vast numbers of Men, Learned and Unlearned, who knew and saw what Popery was ? They were no Fools themselves, and therefore could not hope to impose such a Cheat upon the World.

2. Ask them again, How old this Complaint is, of Protestant Mis-representations of Popery ? how long it has been discovered, that Popery has been thus Abused and Mis-represented ? were the first Reformers charged with these Mis-representations by their Adversaries in those days ? did they deny, that they gave Religious Worship to Saints, and Angels, and the Virgin *Mary*, to Images and Reliques ? did they cry out of Mis-representations, when they were charged with such Doctrines and Practices as these ? or did they defend them, and endeavour to answer those Arguments which the Reformers brought against them ? And yet methinks if Popery had been so grossly Mis-represented by the Reformers, this would as soon have been discovered by the Learned Papists of those days, as by our late Representer ; but it is most likely they did not then think Popery so much Mis-represented, for if they had, they would certainly have complained of it : So that the high improbability of the thing, is a sufficient Reason to Unlearned Protestants, to reject this Charge of Protestant Mis-representations of Popery, as nothing else but a Popish Calumny against Protestants ; and to conclude, that if Popery be Mis-represented now, it is onely by themselves, and that is the very truth of the Case.

Secondly,

Secondly, Let us consider this Charge of Mis-representations in the Consequences of it: It would a little puzzle a man to guess, what service they intend to do the Church of *Rome* by it. For,

1. By complaining of such Mis-representations of Popery, they plainly confess, that those Doctrines and Practices, which we charge the Church of *Rome* with, are very bad, and fit to be rejected and abhorred of all Christians. This the Representative himself confesses, and is very Copious and Rhetorical upon it. Now this is of mighty dangerous consequence; for if it appears, that we have not Mis-represented them, that the Doctrines and Practices we charge them with, are truly the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of *Rome*, then by their own confession, Popery is a very bad Religion, and to be rejected by Christians: Then there was a very just reason for our Separation from the Church of *Rome*, and we are no longer either Schismaticks or Hereticks; and if the Cause be put upon this Issue, we need desire no better Vindication of the Church of *England*: for if they cannot prove us Hereticks or Schismaticks, till they can prove us Mis-representers, I believe, we are pretty secure for this Age.

2. These men, who complain so much of Mis-representing, endeavour to make the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, look as like Protestant Doctrines, as possibly they can, as if there were little or no difference between them: Now methinks this is no great reason for a Protestant to turn Papist, that the Popish Faith is so much the better, the nearer it comes to the Protestant Faith. The truth is, the chief Mystery in this late Trade of Representing and Mis-representing, is no more but this, to joyn a Protestant Faith with Popish Practices; to believe as Protestants do, and to do as Papists do. As to give some

some few instances of this in the Papist Mis-represented and Represented.

The Papist Represented, believes it damnable to Worship Stocks and Stones for Gods, to Pray to Pictures or Images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, or any other Saints. This is good Protestant Doctrine: but then this Papist lays his Prayers before an Image, Kneels and Bows before it, and pays all external Acts of Adoration to Christ and the Saints, as represented by their Images; though ~~it is not~~ properly the Image he honours, but Christ and his Saints by the Images. Which is down-right Popery in Practice.

Thus he believes it is a most damnable Idolatry, to make Gods of men, either living or dead. Which is the Protestant Faith: but yet he prays to Saints, and begs their Intercession, without believing them to be Gods, or his Redeemers: which is Popery in Practice.

He believes it damnable, to think the Virgin Mary more powerful in Heaven than Christ. Which is Protestant Doctrine: but yet he prays to Her oftner than either to God or Christ, says ten Ave-Maries for one Pater Noster; which is a Popish Devotion.

He believes it unlawful to commit Idolatry, and most damnable to Worship any Breaden God. Which is spoke like a Protestant; but yet he pays Divine Adoration to the Sacrament, which is done like a Papist. And thus in most of those thirty seven Particulars of the double Characters of a Papist Mis-represented, his great Art is to Reconcile a Protestant Faith with Popish Practices.

So that this New way of Representing Popery, is no reason to a Protestant to alter his Faith, because, it seems, they believe in many things just as we do; but, I think, it is a very great reason for a Papist to alter his Practice, because a Protestant Faith and Popish Worship do not very well agree. Those who would not make Gods of

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Stocks and Stones, of dead Men and Women, had certainly better not Worship them, which is the most certain way not to make them Gods; and those who think it such damnable Idolatry to Worship a *Breaden God*, in my Opinion, are on the safer side not to Worship the visible Species of Bread in the Eucharist. Let but our Protestant observe this, That when they would Represent Popery most favourably, they either say what Protestants do, or something as like it, as they can, and he will see no reason, either to change his Faith or his Practice.

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